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THE
HISTORY AND ANTIQUITIES
OF THE
TOWN AND BOROUGH
OF
READING IN BERKSHIRE,
WITH
SOME NOTICES OF THE MOST CONSIDERABLE
PLACES IN THE SAME COUNTY.

BY J. DORAN, ESQ.

READING:
CHARLES INGALL, 7, HIGH-STREET;
LONDON:
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PATERNOSTER ROW.

1836.



ADVERTISEMENT.

IN offering this volume to the notice of the Public, but more especially of the inhabitants of the town and neighbourhood of Reading, it has been the wish of the publisher to supply in a compendious and cheap form the means of acquiring such an acquaintance with the history, state, and valuable institutions of this ancient borough, as could not otherwise be obtained but with considerable labor or expence.

The compiler has of course been much indebted to the standard works of Messrs. Coates and Mann, and it is hoped that he has not altogether failed of success in his endeavors, with their aid, and that of information derived from other equally respectable sources, to produce in a condensed and portable volume the more interesting facts and narratives of our local history, continued to the present time.

iv.

The publisher has further to acknowledge the friendly advice and assistance of a gentleman who has had considerable practice in historical and topographical researches; and should the present volume meet with the encouragement which he ventures to anticipate for it, it is his intention, with the assistance which he has been encouraged to expect from that gentleman, to publish a series of **VIEWS** of the town and neighbourhood, together with some plates of antiquities. These it will be practicable either to bind up with the present Volume, or separate, as the respective purchasers may judge most expedient.

7, High-street, 1835.

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HISTORY OF READING.

ALTHOUGH the historian or the antiquary has not deduced the origin of the town of Reading from our British Ancestors—or traced its foundation to the period when the armies of “immortal Rome” colonized the country, it is by no means improbable but that the Britons first fixed here their congregated huts, or that the then masters of the ancient world made it one of their numerous stations.* It is true, there are no remains of British roads in Reading or in its immediate vicinity, nor have any of the relics of Roman grandeur, voluptuousness, or gratitude,—their villas, their hypocausts, or their votive altars,—been discovered here; but the beauty and peculiarity of the situation—a gently rising and commanding eminence, its foot watered by the confluence of two rivers,—are almost sufficient in themselves to sanction a belief, that so desirable a spot would readily be fixed upon for a town or station. Indeed, the purely British derivation of the word “Reading,” would serve to confirm the hypothesis that it was founded by the original inhabitants of Albion.

From the termination *ing*, (a meadow) it has been conjectured that the name is Saxon; and Mr. Manning, in his Saxon Dictionary, supposes the first syllable to be *Red*, or *Rea*, (an overflowing)—thus mak-

* Leland supposes the present site of Reading to have been the *Pontes* of the “Itinerary.”

ing the entire word to signify the meeting of waters in a meadow. It must be confessed that this or any other attempt to discover the true etymology of "Reading," may be mere matter of speculation; but our opinion is—as we have just now stated—that the present word is a mere mutation from the ancient British appellation: namely, *Rhyd*, a ford; and *hén*, old—the *old-ford*; and which well describes the location of the place to the Thames and the Kennet.

But whatever may have been the origin of the town, it is quite certain that Reading was a place of considerable importance in the Saxon era. We first hear of it in the year 871, when the Danes, under the orders of Hinguar and Hubba, ravaged all the southern districts of England, and at last possessed themselves of the town and castle. Detachments of those ferocious marauders, carried devastation into the surrounding neighbourhood; and in order to strengthen a position naturally commanding and important, they threw up strong entrenchments, between the Thames and the Kennet, remains of which, it is asserted,* were to be traced near Catsgrove-hill. In order to check the progress of the invaders, Ethelwulph, then Earl of Berkshire, hastily assembled together a powerful force, and gave battle to them in the marshes of Englefield, cut to pieces and scattered them in every direction; and four days afterwards, being joined by King Ethelred, and his brother, the illustrious Alfred, drove the enemy within their fortifications at Reading. The besieged at last made a desperate sortie, overthrew the Saxon monarch, and maintained undisputed possession of the town throughout the summer months, when they retreated to London. Brompton says, that Ethelred fell in the battle at Englefield, but his statement is not confirmed by the older historians; all we know is, that he was buried at Winborn, in Dorsetshire. In 1006 Sweyn, the Danish King, landed an army, and advancing from the Hampshire coast, into Berkshire, burnt Reading, Cholsey, and Wallingford.

* Dr. Stukeley.

From this period, till the Norman invasion, the history of the town is buried in obscurity and silence. In the record of Domesday,* occurs the following description of Reading:

"The King holds in demesne Redinges. King Edward held in Redinges the hundred. Then and now it defends itself for 43 hides. The arable land is of 40 carucates. One is in demesnes, and 55 villeins, and 30 bordars, with 55 ploughs. There are four mills of 85*s.* and three fisheries of 14*s.* and 6*d.* and 150 acres of meadow. The wood can feed 100 hogs, the feed of which is worth 16*s.* 6*d.* In the time of King Edward and afterwards, it was worth 40*l.* now 48*l.* The King has in the burgh of Redinges 28 hagas (houses) paying 4*l.* 4*s.* for all customs; but he who holds it pays 100*s.* Henry de Fereres has there one haga and half a virgate of land, in which are four acres of meadow, worth 6*s.* Goderic, the Sheriff, held this land for the purpose of making it inhabited. For the same purpose Henry holds it. Reinbaldus, son of Peter the Bishop, held one haga there, which he annexed to Erlei† (Erleigh,) his own manor. Now it is in the King's hands."

Such was the state of Reading in the reign of William I. but from that time till the accession of Henry I. it would seem to have sunk into insignificance, for it is not even named in the old Chronicles. An event, however, now occurred, from which the growth of

* The grand Survey of England is supposed to have been so called, from its having been deposited in a chapel at Winchester, called *Domus Dei*; so says BAKER.—With respect to the title of "Conqueror," generally given to William I. a new "opinion" has of late years been given, which might have originated from a special pleader: The term *Conquisitor*, or *Conquæstor*, merely denoted that he was the first of the family who acquired the Crown of England, and from whom, therefore, all future claims by descent must be derived. The first purchaser (*Perquisitor*, *Conquisitor*, or *Conquæstor*) was he who first acquired an estate to his family by sale, gift, or any other method but descent; but from our disuse of the word in its feudal sense, together with the reflection on William's forcible method of acquisition, we have been led to annex the idea of "victory" to the term *Conquæstor*, which has thus been corrupted into "Conqueror."

† Erleigh-Regis, or Whiteknights?

its prosperity may be dated—we allude to the foundation of the Abbey of Reading, by the King, in 1121.*

* Reading is thus described by the venerable Camden, in his *Britannia*, edit. 1610, translated by Holland : “ Reading excelleth at this day all other townes of this shire in faire streets, and goodly houses : for wealth also of the townsmen and their name in making of cloth, although it hath lost the greatest ornaments it had, to wit, a beautiful Church and a most ancient Castle. But King Henrie the Second so rased it (because it was a place of refuge for King Stephen’s followers) that nothing now remaineth of it but the bare name in the next street. Nigh whereunto, King Henrie the First having plucked down a little Nunnerie that Queene Alfrith had founded in former times, to make satisfaction for her wicked deeds, built for Monks a stately and sumptuous Abbay, and enriched it with great renenewes. Which Prince, to speake out of his very Charter of the foundation, because three Abbates in the Realme of England were in old time for their sinney destroyed, to wit, Reading, Chelseie, and Leonminster, which a long time were held in lay mens hands : by the advice of the Bishops, built a new monasterie of Reading and gave unto it Reading, Chelseie, and Leonminster. In this Abbay was the founder himself, King Henrie, buried with his wife both vealed and crowned, for that shee had been a Queene, and a professed Nunne, and with them their daughter Mawde, as witnesseth the private Historie of this place, although some report, that shee was enterred at Bece in Normandie. This Mawde as well as that Lacedemonian Ladie Lampido, whom Plinie maketh mention of, was a Kings daughter, a Kings wife, and a Kings mother ; that is to say, daughter of this Henrie the First, King of England, wife of Henrie the Fourth, Emperour of Almaine, and mother to Henrie the Second, King of England. Concerning which matter have you here a distichion engraven on her tombe, and the same verily in my judgment conceived in some graci^{ous} aspect of the Muses.

Magna ortu, maior-que viro, sed maxima partu,
Hic jacet Henrici filia, sponsa, parens.

The daughter, wife, the mother eke, of Henrie, lieth heere ;
Much blest by birth, by marriage more, but most by issue deere.

Let us returne againe from persons to places. This Monastery wherein that noble King Henry the First was buried, is now converted to be the Kings house, which hath adioining unto it a very goodly stable, stored to the full with Prince like and most generous steeds. But as touching this place,

It must be understood, however, that from a very early period, Reading had been distinguished by a religious house of considerable celebrity—but whether it was a nunnery or a monastery, cannot now be ascertained. The probability is, that it was destroyed during the irruption of the Danes, and that the new Abbey rose, in all its architectural and ascetic grandeur, on its site, and where its massive relics now stand in the solitude and solemnity of decay and ruin. The endowment of the new Abbey accorded with the religious munificence of the day: Henry not only annexed to it the lands of the ancient Abbeys of Cholsey, and Leominster, in Herefordshire, but vested in the Monks the proprietary of the town of Reading itself, moreover adding to the authority of the Abbot the regal right of coining money. The fraternity had freedom from all customs, tolls, and contributions, throughout England and the sea-ports—the hundred courts were vested with *soc* and *sac*, *toll* and *theam*, *infangtheof*, and *hamsockna*—all tolls due to lords of a manor, and the privilege of trying thieves and house-breakers within the Abbey territory, &c. with judicial power, as ample as was enjoyed in the Royal Courts: if the Abbot should delay justice, the King was to interfere, but not so as to infringe on the liberties of the church of Reading. Although some of these extensive rights became passive in the tumultuous times of Stephen and Henry II. they were fully restored by

listen also to the Poet describing the Tames as he passeth heereby.

From hence he little Chawsey seeth, and hastneth for to see
 Faire Reading town, a place of name, where Cloth's ywoven be.
 This shewes our Ælfreds victorie, what time Begaceg was slaine;
 With other Danes, whose carcasses lay trampled on the plaine;
 And how the fields ydrenched with blood upon them shed;
 Where as the Prince in Stable now hath standing many a stede
 Of noblest kind, that neigh and snort into the aire a loud,
 Tracing the ring and keeping pace that stately is and proud,
 Whiles they desire to learne withal in our warres for to serve,
 But where (alas) is piety? Such cursed deeds deserve
 Purged to be by sacrifice. A King of Normans race
 Henry the first, entered heere, now turn'd out of his place,
 An out cast lies dishonoured. Who seeks his tombe shall misse:
 For Covetise envied that King the small mould which was his.
 See see, how Princes monuments it ransacks where it is.

John, in the 12th year of his reign. The King's justices itinerant sat in the Abbot's own court, his seneschal or steward associating with them on the bench. This judicial power of the Lord Abbot did not sleep: it is on record, that William Bren, who had been detected hunting in Windsor Forest, fled to Reading, where he was imprisoned by the Abbot, who refused to surrender him to Walter de Pickford, Constable of Windsor Castle; and this apparent contumacy was actually sanctioned by a precept from Edward I. dated at Carnarvon, in the 11th of his reign.—It was directed that, on the death of an Abbot, the possession of the monastery, with its privileges, should be vested in the Prior and Monks of the capitular body; the Abbot was to possess no exclusive revenue, but to enjoy, in common with his brethren, the abundant income of the establishment; he was not to waste the alms of the monastery on lay relations, but distribute them in relieving the poor, and affording to strangers the rights of hospitality. Although Henry had, by a royal edict, abolished the privilege which Abbots had assumed of conferring the honor of knighthood, he reserved, by an especial provision, that right to the Abbot of Reading, provided that the solemnity was performed by him in his clerical habit—an exception just as silly as the privilege itself was anomalous.* Another charter soon after followed, exempting the convent from finding ship-money, erecting bridges, building castles, and all kinds of public service. None

* This and the three preceding centuries the church, properly called *militant*, was in its glory; and the power assumed by ecclesiastics, was not at all peculiar to England. When Paris was besieged by the Normans in 885, Goslin, then Bishop, assumed the helmet and battle-axe, and fought manfully on the ramparts. A hundred years afterwards, Bishops and Abbots took the sword, and we find that the Abbot of Verdun obtained permission at Cologne, in 988, to go without his sword.—At the battle of Bovines, in 1214, a Bishop of Beauvais used an iron mace, observing that it would be irregular in him to shed human blood: some of his descendents of the priesthood have thought differently.

of the King's officers were allowed to trespass in the Abbot's woods, and the Monks were to have the same liberty in their woods as the King had in his own. By a third charter, the King conceded to the Abbey the privilege of a fair on St. Lawrence's Day, and three days afterwards, ordering that no one should be disturbed in coming to or going from it, under the penalty of 10*l*. The King gave to the Abbey the churches of Thatcham, and Wargrave, and with a confirmation of the manor of Hanborough, in Oxfordshire; with a confirmation of the manor of Rockington, or Rowington, in Warwickshire; a hide and a half of land in Houghton, Beds; the church of Wychebury, Wilts; and lands at Hampton, Hants, and the estate of Robert de Ferrars, in Reading. Amongst the benefactors to the new foundation were the following:

Adeliza, Queen of Henry I. subsequently married to William de Albini, Earl of Arundel—gave the manor of Aston, Herts; with the land of Reginald, the Forester, at Stanton Harcourt, Oxfordshire, together with the patronage and revenues of the church, which were to supply the expense of a lamp to burn continually before the pix, and the tomb of the founder. On the death of the Earl, her husband, Adeliza further endowed the Abbey with the church and revenues of Berkeley-harress, Gloucestershire, with the prebends thereof; the prebends of two manors, and the churches of Cheam, Eslingham, Wotton, Beverstan, and Almodesbury; and 100*s*. to be paid annually on Christmas-Day, from a *hithe*, or wharf, in London, her property, towards celebrating the founder's anniversary.

The Empress Matilda, daughter of the illustrious founder, vested the Abbey with the manor of Blewbury, &c. with the tenants in servile tenure.—She also gave to the brotherhood the manor of East Hendred, the lands of Herbert Fitz Fulcherius, in Marlborough; the lands of Geoffrey Purcell, in Windsor and Cateshell; the manor of Bromesfield, and confirmation of the churches of Berkeley-harress, Stanlin, and Thatcham.

David, King of Scotland, the manor of Rindalgros, reserving to himself the right of thereafter founding a convent at Rindalgros.

King Stephen—various confirmations of the gifts of his predecessors ; lands in Wigstan, held by William the King's Almoner, a Monk at Reading ; houses and lands in Cambridge and Southampton ; reserving to the crown a rent-charge of 100*s.* from East Hendred.

Henry II. confirmed all the preceding grants, with Careswell, in Burghfield, by Almericus Fitz Ralph ; the manor of Streatley, by William de Mandeville. He also gave the Abbot license to inclose a park, in a place called *Cumba*, for sick persons, whether Monks or strangers ; and further confirmed the sale of lands at Whitley, by Peter de Cosham (Caversham?) for 80*l.* and a bezant of gold annually. Moreover, he granted the Abbey charters for annual fairs at Reading on St. James's Day, and the three days following ; confirming also the right of a *Sunday* market at Thatcham, commanding the inhabitants of the county to attend it, and forbidding the men of Newbury to do them injury.* The King granted forty marks annually from the manor of *Hoo* ; and license for the Monks to import foreign goods free of duty.

Richard I. confirmed former grants ; and the land given by William Earl of Sussex, at Quidenham, Norfolk, and that by William Earl Ferrars in Stamford ; by Henry Fitz Gerald in Sawbridgeworth ; by Michael de Basseville in Lechebroc ; by Ralph de Offinton (Uffington?) ; Englefield church with its appendages, &c.

King John gave a mark of gold to cover the hand of St. James, and also gave the head of St. Philip the Apostle.—How or where these reliques were obtained does not appear ; but it is pretty certain that

* We may infer from this circumstance, that the grants and privileges made to the Abbey of Reading, were not beheld with a favorable eye by the neighbourhood.

three or four heads of the same saint were enumerated in the catalogues of effects given in by the commissioners at the period of the dissolution; and an ancient author adds, there were found in different Abbeys enough of pieces of the "true cross" to build a ship of war.

Henry III. was particularly partial to Reading, where a great number of his patents were dated. He also added largely to the revenues of the monastery: Ann. reg. 37, the Abbey being much in debt, he issued precepts to all knights and freemen holding lands under the monastery, to afford assistance in liquidating such debts, by contribution. He granted the Monks free-warren on all their estates, with exemption of "lawing" of all dogs belonging to them within the Royal Forests; and also exempted certain of their lands from the operation of the forest laws. In the 26th year of his reign, the King acknowledged the receipt of 100 marks from the Abbey.

Edward II. after confirming charters, and granting a new one of great power, further confirmed the Abbot's right to hold 40 acres of land in the New Forest, at 40s. per annum rent, to be paid to Queen Eleanor; that Queen, to whom the New Forest had been granted, granting permission that all the Abbot's cattle should be free from pannage and herbage, throughout the year.

Edward III. restored to the Abbey the privilege of coining money, which had been suspended in the preceding reign; and ordered that no officer of the King should execute any writ in Reading; and that the Monks should enjoy all privileges of waifs, &c. goods of felons, &c. in the fullest extent. Although this monarch was so bountiful in his grants to the Abbey, it appears that in the 12th year of his reign he borrowed from it jewels valued at 224*l.* 9*s.* and and in his 20th year 100*l.*

Richard II. confirmed all former privileges, provided that the Abbot repaired the tomb and statue of the Royal Founder.

We have thus particularized some of the royal and other donations made to the Abbey of Reading; but the other detailed features of its history—its growth, decline, and dissolution—will be found in subsequent pages.

In 1125, the Abbey was finished, and it is in this year that the first charter bears date, which states, that the Abbeyes of Reading, Cholsey, and Leominster, having been destroyed for their sins,* and their estates fallen into lay hands, the King, with the advice of his prelates and others, had built a new monastery at Reading, and endowed it with the former possessions of Reading, Cholsey, and Leominster. Ten years afterwards, the King died near Rouen, where his heart was deposited, but the body was brought to Reading Abbey, and there interred with great solemnity.† In

* This passage affords proof that there had previously been a monastic foundation in Reading; which, in all probability, was destroyed during one of the inroads of the Danes.

† Part of a coffin is preserved in the school established among the ruins of the Abbey, and is shown as that in which the remains of the Royal Founder were inclosed: but this is more than doubtful.—The late Archdeacon Nares, however, was of a different opinion, and as he has put that opinion on record, we subjoin it:—

“Observations on the Discovery of part of a Sarcophagus, at Reading Abbey, in Berkshire; supposed to have contained the Remains of King Henry I. Communicated to the Society of Antiquaries, in a letter from the Rev. Robert Nares, B. D., F. R. S. and S. A. to Henry Ellis, Esq. F. R. S., Secretary. Read before the Society, Feb. 15, 1816. From the *Archæologia*, vol. xviii.

“SIR,—It appears from Sandford's Genealogical History, that, at the suppression of the Religious Houses, under Henry VIII, the rage of Reformation went so far as to destroy even the tombs and monuments of the founders. This he particularly specifies to have been the case with the tomb of Henry I. the Founder of Reading Abbey, whose bones, he says, ‘Could not enjoy repose in his grave, —but were *thrown out*, to make room for a stable of horses.’ p. 28. Accident having lately brought to light what appears to be part of the wreck of that very tomb, I have thought that a short account of it might be acceptable to the Society of Antiquarians.

“On the 24th of November, 1815, in digging for some dry earth or gravel, to assist in making a footway to our National Schools, there was found, not three feet below the surface, a large fragment of a stone Sarcophagus, or rather Coffin; since it had the form of the modern Coffin, not of the antique Sarcophagus. The part found consisted only of the bottom of the Coffin, and that broken; but only

1140, King Stephen passed through Reading, with a powerful army, on his way to the unsuccessful siege

into two large fragments. Of the upright sides and ends nothing remained, but so much as was included within the thickness of the the bottom. From this small specimen, however, it appears, that the whole had been elegantly carved; for it exhibits the bases, and the bottoms of the shafts, of a complete row of small columns, or rather half columns, which evidently surrounded the whole Coffin. The forms of the columns have been fancifully varied, being alternately semi-circular and semi-hexagonal.

"The whole length of the Sarcophagus is seven feet, by two feet six inches at the head, but gradually contracted to two feet at the smaller end. The thickness of the stone is seven inches and a half. The columns have been fifty in number; namely, eighteen on each side; at the broad end eight, and at the narrower six. Six very strong iron rings had been let into the substance of the stone, and soldered in with lead: namely, two on each side, and one at each end, at regular distances.

"It is difficult to imagine for what purpose these rings could be intended, except for that of letting down the coffin, with all its contents, into a vault. In a vault however it was not found, nor could any more fragments of the coffin be discovered near it. The probability is, that all the vaults have been long ago filled up, by the fall of the ruins, and the accumulation of rubbish.

"The place where the coffin was found must have been near the centre of the Choir, in the Abbey Church, but it had probably been removed from its original situation, broken, and left upon the surface; the small quantity of earth found above it, being evidently such as had been gradually accumulated on the spot. No bones were near it.

"The reasons for conjecturing that it may have been a part of the coffin of Henry I. are chiefly founded on the curious workmanship which had been bestowed upon it; a decoration not likely to have been given to any thing less important than a Royal Coffin, when destined to be buried in a vault. Its mutilated state attests the violence of the destroyers, which stands upon historical testimony; and it might perhaps, not unfairly, be urged, that the small columns, as they evidently belong not to any style of Gothic design, were probably of the earlier kind, which has been termed Saxon. The bases stand so close together, that the columns were probably made to support a set of small, interlaced, semi-circular arches, resting on the alternate capitals, according to an ordinary style of decoration in use at that period.

"A leaden coffin was found in the ruins, in the year 1785; which was rather hastily attempted (by a person who had not seen it) to be considered as belonging to the founder; but the suggestion was victoriously refuted, almost immediately after.* Whether my conjecture may be liable or not to the same fate, I cannot pretend to say; but having stated my reasons, if they can be fairly refuted, I shall make no attempt to defend them.

"The fragment is now deposited in the National School for boys, within the ruins, and may be inspected at any time, by applying to the Master.

"I am, Sir,

"Your obedient humble Servant,

"St. Mary's, Reading,

"ROBERT NARES."

Feb. 10, 1816."

"* See Gent. Mag. Dec. 1765."

of Wallingford Castle ; and the following year, the Empress Matilda honored the town with her presence during rogation week. She was received with great formality ; and it was here that she gave an interview to Robert D'Oiley, who consented to deliver up to her the Castle of Oxford. According to Stow, she conferred on Robert de Sigello, a Monk of Reading, the Bishopric of London. In 1156, William, the eldest son of Henry II. was buried in the Abbey Church : the year 1163 was rendered somewhat remarkable in the annals of Reading, and afforded a striking instance of the barbarism of the age, by the "Appeal of Battle" between Robert de Montfort and Henry de Essex.—It originated in the Welsh wars, and is adverted to by Baker, and other of our old historians. It appears that, in 1157, during a conflict in the Marches of the Principality, several of the King's chief nobility were cut off by an ambuscade, together with a great number of men at arms and private soldiers. Those who fled spread abroad a rumour that the King was either taken or killed. A general panic prevailed—the remainder of the army was thrown into disorder—and Essex, who was the hereditary bearer of the royal standard, threw it away, and trusted to the speed of his horse for his personal safety. It was not likely that, in those chivalric days, such an apparent act of pusillanimity and cowardice would pass unnoticed or unpunished. Robert de Montfort denounced him as a traitor ; and Essex met the charge by the scarcely palliative assertion, that at the time he really believed the King had fallen—and it would seem that in all probability such would have been the fact, had not Roger Earl of Clare rallied a powerful division of the troops, and by again displaying the banner of his Sovereign, preserved the disheartened residue of the army. Montfort's appeal was heard by the King, and a royal mandate was issued for the knightly combatants to meet on an island, near Reading Abbey,*

* The last appeal of the ancient law of battle was in 1818, in the case *ASHFORD v. THORNTON*—but it was not brought to issue—and Thornton, the murderer, ended his days in

on the 8th of April. This was, no doubt, considered an event of no ordinary importance, for the King

that last place of refuge to depravity, the United States of America.—Several cases of judicial combat are on record: in 1279, Alan, Baron de la Zouche, marrying one of the co-beiresses of Roger de Quincy, Earl of Winchester, acquired a great estate in Leicesteshire, in right of his wife; but having some claims on John Earl of Warren, who was for fighting the affair to its termination, instead of trying it by civil law, the parties met in Westminster Hall, and the Baron was killed.—See *Gough's Camden*, vol. 2, page cxciv.—“In 1445 (says Grafton) an Armorer's servaunt of London, appelled his master of treason, which offered to be tried by battaill. At the day assigned the frends of the master brought to him malmesye and aquavite to comforte him withal, but it was the cause of his and their discomfort; for he poured in so much, that when he came into the place at Smithfelde, where he should fight, both his witte and strength fayled him; and so hee, being a tall and hardie personage, ouerladed with hotte drinckes, was vanquished of his sevrant, being but a cowarde and a wretch, whose body was drawn to Tiborne, and there hanged and beheaded.” This incident was dramatised by Shakspeare; in *Hen. VI.* part II. act 2, scene III.—The judicial documents in this case are still extant, among the Cott. MSS. and it would seem from the annexed warrant, that the Crown provided armour, as well as “intendants,” or umpires:

“BY THE KING.—Reverend Fader in God, ryghte trusty and well-beloved, for asmoche as John Davy hath nowe late appelled before the Constable and Marshal of this our Reaume of England William Catour, of London, armourer, of traison ymagined, and doon by hym agenst our persone, for which cause the said Constable and Marshal have by assent of bothe parties assigned a day of battaille unto them, as lawe wol: We therefore wol and charge you, that under our prville seel, being in yor warde, ye do make our l'res of warrant, in deue forme, directed unto oure wel beloved Squier, John Stanley, Sergeant of our Armoury, charging hym to do, make, and ordeigne, in al goodly haste, good and souffisant armure for the said appelland, and al order farneys and wapen necessary unto hym in that behalve—And over this, we wol, that under oure seid p've seel, ye do make oure order l'res seve'lles, in deue forme, directed unto Sir John Stewart, Sir John Astley, knights; Edmond Hampden and Thomas Montgomery, squires; and to Thomas Parker, armourer, to be intendants and of counsel with the said appelland, and semblable l'res unto Syr Thomas Grey, Syr Robert Shotesbroke, knights; John Lovell and John Sharpe, squiers; and to Harman, armourer, dwelling in Southwerk, to be intendants and of counsel with the seid partie defendant, as the cas requireth. And thees our l'res shal be your warrant. Given under our signet, at our Castell at Wyndesore, the xix daye of Octobur, the yeaue of oure regne xxv.—W. CROSBY.”

attended in person, and a number of the nobility. The combat was commenced by Montfort with great impetuosity and fury; and Essex, for some time, cautiously met the assault; at last, however, to use the phraseology of the historian, "turning reason into rage, he took upon himself the part of a challenger, and not of a defender," and fell, covered with wounds, and to every appearance dead. The Monarch, under this impression, granted permission to the Monks to inter the body, expressly commanding that no further violence should be done to it. But the defeated knight speedily recovered, was admitted a member of the ascetic brotherhood, and died a professed Monk.*

* The scene of this conflict was in all probability the island near to Caversham-bridge, on the east side. Baker, in his *Chronicle*, does not notice the battle; he merely observes that the King punished Henry (Earl) de Essex, "by condemning him to be shorn a Monk, and put into the Abbey of Reading—and his lands seized into the King's hands." In the *Berkshire Chronicle* of March 30, 1830, the combat was introduced in a poetic form, from which we annex two short extracts:

"The King—the King is dead,"
 Oried the maiden-hearted Knight;
 And the banner-royal down he flung,
 And fled from the field of fight.
 And gauntlet, lance, and helm,
 Strewed the marches far and wide;
 But the prowess of the warlike King
 Stopped the rush of the threatening tide,
 In the ravine's narrow depths
 He rallied his men at arms—
 On the point of his lance his scarf he showed,
 To sooth their wild alarms:
 "No Englishman is he
 "Who flees from his true liege lord:
 "Like the hunted boar the foe attack
 "With the edge of Victory's sword."
 Earth trembled at the tread
 Of the battle's reflux might—
 And the sun burst forth her golden rays
 To glad the glorious sight.
 Like the dried leaf in the dale,
 Sped by the blast of heaven,
 The vaunting foe, over the mountain tracks—
 Through the shadowy glens,—were driven.
 The dragon-standard fell,
 Besmeared with dust and blood;
 And the vanquished foe-men fled in shame
 To Coed-Ewloe's wood.

In 1184, a synod, or convention of the Bishops of the province, was held here, at which the King attended, and a deputation of the Monks of Christ Church, Canterbury. The assemblage took place on the 5th of August, being St. Oswald's Day, its principal object being to elect an Archbishop, in the room of Richard, the immediate successor of that violent churchman, Thomas à Becket. The following year, Henry gave an audience at Reading to Heraclius, Patriarch of Jerusalem, who demanded his assistance against the Saracens.* In 1191, Richard Cœur de Lion held a parliament here. During the reign of John, a synod was held in Reading, by which it was ordained, that no ecclesiastical person should have more than one benefice with cure of souls; a regulation which, notwithstanding its beneficial operation, has not in all subsequent instances been attended to. Henry III. in 1227, kept his Christmas at Reading; and two years afterwards the pleadings in the Courts of Justice, in Michaelmas term, were held here. It does not appear that either Edward I. or II. ever visited this part of the county; but it is certain that, in 1275, the former took the pecuniary affairs of the Abbey into his own hands, and appointed commissioners to investigate them. In 1346, the King, after celebrating the festival of Christmas at Guild-

* * * *

'Neath Reading's cloistered, fretted roof,
 Was held the Kingly Court,
 And all around was wassail cheer,
 And minstrelsy, and sport.
 But now approached the day of fight,
 A day of joy—of grief—
 Of grief to him, whose dastard heart,
 Sought in the grave relief:
 Heavy forebodings ever flashed
 Across his care-worn eye,
 And the deep sorrow of his soul
 Escaped in many a sigh—
 As from his latticed casement, he
 Beheld the beauteous view—
 The fir-clad hill, the dale, the stream
 Its fertile course pursue;

* * * *

* It was during the residence of the Patriarch in this country, that he consecrated the Temple Church, in London.

ford, had grand jousts and tournaments at Reading. In 1359, John of Gaunt was married here to Blanche, daughter and co-heir of Henry Plantagenet, Duke of Lancaster.—An assembly of nobility, with the Mayor and Aldermen of London, took place here in 1384, to inquire into and punish the seditious practices of the late Mayor of that city, John Northampton; whose insurrectionary spirit, however, had been checked by the undaunted conduct of Sir Robert Knolles. His goods were confiscated, and he received sentence of perpetual imprisonment. In 1389, the King met an assembly of his nobles at Reading. The second year (1400) after the accession of Henry IV. part of Reading is said, by Dart,* to have been burnt in the conspiracy of Sir Bernard Brocas, and others, to restore the deposed King. But this is an error: when the King overtook the conspirators near Colnbrook, they retreated to Sonning, where the young Queen lay, and from thence fled to Cirencester, where several houses were set on fire by the instigation of a priest. It was there that Sir Bernard Brocas, Sir B. Shelley, Sir Thomas Blount, and twenty-eight other distinguished persons, were taken prisoners, and being carried to Oxford, where the King lay, were beheaded.† In 1439, the parliament held at Westminster was adjourned to Reading; and parliaments were also convened here in 1451 and 1452.—About Michaelmas, 1464, Edw. IV. who had been privately married to Elizabeth, daughter of the Duchess of Bedford, held a council here, and conducted her to the Abbey, where she was publicly acknowledged as his Queen. About the same time, the Lord Maltravers, son of the Earl of Arundel, was married at Reading to Margaret, the Queen's sister.—Parlia-

* Hist. of West. Abbey.

† Baker, p. 159, and Grafton, p. 412.—Coates, in his History of Reading, says, that Brocas was beheaded in London, and buried in St. Edmond's chapel, Westminster Abbey, with this inscription on his memorial: "*Hic jacet Bernardus Brocas, miles, quondam Cam. Anne Regine Anglie.*" The probability is, that the corpse was removed thence from Oxford.

ments were held here in 1466 and 1467. About twenty years after this, Henry VII. on the occasion of visiting the town, directed the alms-house of the poor sisters to be converted into a grammar-school. In 1490, Reading was assessed 24*l.* 1*s.* 1*½d.* towards the expenses of the proposed war against France, and the following year found harness for six soldiers, at the cost of 7*l.* Henry VIII. was at Reading in 1509, and next year confirmed to the Corporation all their former privileges. It appears from an entry in the diary of the body corporate, that in 1543, ten appareled horses, and ten harnessed soldiers were furnished for the Scotch war; and in the next year, there were raised at the charge of the town, for the wars in France, thirteen harnessed men and horses, and twenty harnessed foot-soldiers.

The visit of Edw. VI. to Reading, in 1552, is thus noticed in the Corporation Diary: "The xiii day of September, in the year above said, the kynges majesty in thend of his progresse came to Redyng, at the which tyme Thomas Aldeworth, mayor, accompanied with the substaunce of thenhabitants of the said towne, as well burges as others, in ther best apparell, receyved his grace at Colley crosse, all beyng on fote, wher the seid mayor, on his knee, humbly welcumyd his grace, and kissed the mase, and delyvered it unto his grace, who most gentilly stayed his horse and received it, and immediately delyvered agayn the same mase unto the seid mayor; and also his majesty further stayed his hors untill the seid mayor had taken his hors; and then the seyd mayor, appoynted by a gentelman usher, rode before the kings majesty thorough the towne, into the kyng's place. At the whych tyme, for as much as it was the first tyme of his grace's cumyng, the seid mayor presented and gave unto his majestie ii yoke of oxen, which cost xv li. the charges whereof was borne by thenhabitants of the seid towne, as well by the burges as others.

"Also at the same tyme, being his grace's first cumyng, certain officers then demaunded certayn dewties, as they called hit, which were payed unto them at the

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costs and charges of the seyd mayor and burges, as hereafter followeth :

" In p'mis to the harrolds,	- - - -	xxs.
To the serjaunts at arms,	- - - -	xiiis. iiid.
To the trumpetts,	- - - -	xs.
To the kyng's cuppbearer,	- - - -	vis. viiid.
To the fotemen,	- - - -	xs.
To the clark of the m'kett	- - -	vis. viiid.
To the m'shall,	- - - -	iiis. iiid.

lxxs." *

On the 21st July, 1553, ten armed soldiers were furnished by the Borough against the Duke of Northumberland; and on the 16th August, six well harnessed horse soldiers were ordered to attend her Majesty at Richmond, but their services were dispensed with on the 25th of the same month.—The visit of Mary and Philip to Reading, in 1554, is thus recorded in the diary of the Corporation: "The second day of August, in the 1st and 2nd yere of their regnes, the seid kyng and quene came to Redyng, at the which tyme, Robert Bowyere then beyng mayor, accompanied with the substaunce of the inhabitants of the seid towne, as well burges as others, in their best apparells, received their graces at the upper end of Sivear strete, all beyng on fote, where the seid mayor, humblie on his knee, welcumed their graces, and kyssed the mase, and delyv'd hit first unto the quene, and her g'ce immediately delyv'ed hit agene unto the mayor, and wylled him after to delyv' the same unto the kyng, which his grace gentely received, and immediately also delyv'ed it agayn unto the mayor, and then the seid mayor appoynted by the kyng of the harolds, rode before the king and quene through the town into the kyng's place, with the mase in his hond; at the which tyme, for as much as it was the first tyme of ther g'ces cumyng, the seid mayor p'sented ther graces with iiij greate fatt oxen, which cost xvi li. the charge whereof

* It would seem from this document, that the art of imposition was as well known in the 16th century as in the intellectual year 1830.

was borne by thenh'tants of the seide town, as well burgeses as others, over and besides rewards gyven to officers, the sum of iiii l. x s. as apperith at the first cumyng of kyng Edward the VIth."

Two years afterwards, 40 men, in "blew cots with red crosses, that cost 6s. and 4d. a cote, with forty new bills, that cost 18d. a bill, and conducte (money) 16d. a man," were provided by the town, for the public service, at the charge of 18l. 6s. 8d.—In 1565, an entry was made in the books of the Corporation of London, that all the burgeses of the town of Reading should be discharged of toll within that city, as soon as their names should be certified in writing to the court, in conformity to "the aunciente allowance of their liberties to them, made by this courte in that behalfe."—The Queen (Eliz.) paid Reading a visit in 1568, 1572, 1575, 1592, 1602, and 1603. In 1575, "her Grace" had a seat fitted up for her in St. Lawrence's Church, the pulpit was ornamented with a new cloth, and the body of the church was strewed with rushes and flowers. In her visits in 1601 and 1602, she dined at Causham (Caversham) House, the seat of Lord Knollys, the Comptroller of the Household; and at Englefield with Sir Edw. Morris. The King and Queen were in Reading in 1612 and 1613.—Owing to the plague in London, in 1625, Michaelmas-term was kept here.* It appears that the different courts were held in various apartments of the Abbey, that of the King's Bench occupying the great hall. The Exchequer was held in the Town-hall, and the Court of Augmentation in the school-house; the Lord Keeper lodged at Sir Edw. Clarke's house; the Lord Treasurer and the King's Attorney with Mr John Saunders, in the Friars; most of the Judges

* By a Proclamation, dated at Salisbury, Oct. 11, Charles I. strictly charged and commanded "all and every the inhabitants of the said town (Reading) and all other places within three miles thereof, that they wholly forbear to buy or receive any wares or merchandize from the cities of London and Westminster, or places adjoining, or from any other place, now or lately infected with that contagious sickness, until the end of the said term of St. Michael."

took up their abode at the Bear Inn, which was called "Serjeant's Inn, in Fleet-street;" the other Judges at Mr. Thomas Turner's house, near High-bridge, which was called "Serjeant's Inn, in Chancery-lane." We now come to that memorable period in our local annals, the

SIEGE OF READING,

And for the greater part of the following detail, we acknowledge ourselves indebted to Coates's History. It would seem that the first manifestation of "civil dudgeon" in Reading, was first elicited in 1642, when we find the annexed entry in the Diary of the Siege:—

1642, Oct. 1, O'Neal, serjeant-major to count Robert,* sent a letter to Mr. Vachell, the high-sheriffe of Berks, commanding him in the king's name to raise the power of the county to conduct the king through it; but he stayed the messenger, and refused to obey it. Reding is well fortified, but they want ordnance.

Oct. 23. The battle of Edge-hill was fought near Keinton, in Warwickshire. After the taking of Banbury, the king marched to his own house at Woodstock, and the next day, with his whole army to Oxford.

Nov. 1. A party of horse, having been sent out from Abingdon, advanced farther than they had order to do; and, upon their approach to Reading, where Harry Martin was governor for the parliament, he evacuated the place in great confusion, with his garrison.

Nov. 4. The King came to Reading from Benson, it being thought so good a post, that, if the king found it necessary to make his own residence at Oxford, it would be much the better by having a garrison at Reading.

Nov. 5. "A report made that the king was come to Redding. Sir Peter Killegrew returned from the king with a letter from secretary Nicholas, directed to the speaker of the house of peers, dated the fourth instant, from Redding." This letter informed the house that the king would receive any petition from his houses of parliament, and grant a safe conduct to

* Prince Rupert.

any but such as were proclaimed traitors. The house of Commons would not admit of any exceptions, nor appoint any members but what they had before appointed.

Many of the inhabitants of Reading who favored the parliament, came to the house of Commons, affirming, "that they were ready and willing to adventure their lives and fortunes in this service. But, finding the maior, and others of the chief of the town, were of the malignant party, and did seek to intrap a worthy member of the house of Commons, and did agree among themselves to surrender the town to the cavaliers, they, for the preservation of themselves and their armes, left the towne."

In order to throw some degree of ridicule on the mayor of Reading for his loyalty, the following story appeared in the newspapers of the day. "At the king's coming to Reddinge, a speech was made unto him by the maior of the towne; wherein, after he had in the best words he could devise, bid him welcome thither, for want of more matter he concluded very abruptly. Not long after, he invited Prince Robert to a sumptuous dinner, providing for him all the dainties he could get, but especially a woodcock, which he brought in himself. Prince Robert gave him many thanks for his good cheere, and asked him whose was all that plate that stood upon the cupboard? The mayor, who had set out all his plate to make a show, and besides had borrowed a great deal of his neighbours to grace himself withal, replied, "And please your highness, that plate is mine." "No," quoth the prince, "this plate is mine;" and so accordingly he took it all away, bidding him be of good cheere, for he took it, as the parliament took it, upon the publick faith."

After the engagement at Brentford, the king went to Hampton-court, and his forces to Kingston; but, on the parliament's declaring that their apprehensions for the safety of the city would allow of no propositions for peace while his army lay so near London, he marched back to Reading. Soon after this, a vote passed both houses, that no other measure but that of

his majesty's coming to the parliament should be thought on for the purpose of any treaty or accommodation. It was therefore resolved that Reading should be kept as a garrison ; and, having continued in the town from Nov. 4 to 28, the king marched to Oxford, after having seen the intended works in some forwardness, leaving sir Arthur Aston governor, with 2000 foot, and a regiment of horse.

Dec. 6. " Colonel Aston, it is said, fortifies strongly at the hill where Sir Charles Blount's house is, which commands Redding."

Jan. 14. " Wednesday last, colonel Anson feasted the magistrates of Reading, and hanged a man or two of his own, for some notorious crimes, rather to stop the mouths of the people, for his murdering master Boys, an honest citizen of London, by a seeming act of justice. They write that Newberry hath been plundered a second time by the Redding forces in a most deplorable manner, and that honest old sir Francis Knowles, the ancientest parliament man in England, had much prejudice done to his house and tenants," (probably at Battle-farm,) " within a mile of Reading, this last week."

Feb. 9. " This day, by letters sent from Reading, there came advertisement that sir Arthur Aston had escaped a personal surprisal which he was very likely to have fallen into. One master Englefield, a gentleman and friend of his, had the weeke before bespoken his company to be at dinner on the Tuesday following, being the Tuesday now last passed, whereof some private roundhead taking notice, had sent intelligence thereof unto the forces of the rebels lying not far off. But sir Arthur Aston, understanding that the entertainment was intended at a country house of the said gentleman not far from Reading, sent word he would gladly bear him company within the town, but he held it very unfit to goe forth a feasting, the enemy being then so neere him. This alteration of the place and purpose not being made known unto the rebels, they came on Tuesday according to the first intelligence to the number of 600 foot and 200 horse, hoping to have surpris'd him and all his company as he sate at din-

ner; but, finding how unexpectedly they were disappointed, they returned no wiser than they came, without any hurt done unto the house that we heere of yet."

Feb. 12. Five hundred dragoons, and three troops of horse, marched from Reading to Henley, where were two regiments of foot belonging to the parliament, which were surprised in the night, being tired with a long march. The king's troops reached the market-place; but, being checked by a sudden fire from one of the enemy's pieces of artillery in a narrow pass, they were repulsed with the loss of two officers and several men.

Feb. 12. Sir Jacob Astley, with a party from Reading, marched as far as Old Windsor on Sunday night, and drove away all the horses and cattle they could find, the alarm not reaching Windsor castle till the next morning.

April 15. The very day on which the treaty expired at Oxford, being the last of the twenty days assigned, to which the king could not procure an addition by any importunity, Essex marched from Windsor, having repaired the bridges over the Loddon, and sat down before Reading. According to Clarendon, his army consisted of 16,000 foot, and above 3,000 horse, with all things necessary for a siege. In the town were above 3,000 foot, and a regiment of 300 horse. Essex made a feint as if he intended to march for Oxford, having so given out, and reached the west end of the town where the works were weakest, and there possessed himself of a hedge and ditch, which gave him an opportunity of beginning his entrenchments, the hedges not having been cut down, nor the ground levelled, which was thought a piece of neglect in the governor. Upon the first sitting down before the town, says Clarendon, after they had taken a full view of the ground, a council of war was held in what manner to proceed, whether by assault or approach. After some deliberation, the danger and disgrace of a repulse, if they should fail in the assault, and the certainty of receiving forage and provisions which they had in great plenty from London, inclined the greater

part of the council to pursue the business by approach, with which the general complied. Essex then summoned the town to surrender, but was answered by sir Arthur Aston, that he would starve or die in it. The general having secured a post "at a knight's house about a mile from the town, on the south-west," probably at Southcot, sir John Blagrave's, began to batter a work at a barn called Harrison's barn. There was a fortified post near sir Charles Blount's, at Mapledurham, which was taken by the besiegers, and the house plundered, though many were hurt by the bursting of their own petard; and they possessed themselves of the post on Caversham-hill, which commands the whole town. The chief care of the approaches was committed to serjeant-major-general Philip Skipton. The lord Gray of Wark was stationed on the east, while colonel Homestead's regiment of foot, with some troops of horse, were posted near the river, to prevent any supplies coming by water. The parliamentary accounts describe Reading as "a place strongly fortified, with a deep ditch round it, and strong works near and remote." But, according to Clarendon, the fortifications were too mean to endure a regular siege, being intended for winter quarters, not a standing garrison. However, the town was well stored with provisions; and, though deficient in ammunition, there being scarcely 40 barrels of powder in the magazines, the garrison supported the enemy's attack with sufficient resolution; and, before the town was completely surrounded, a party from Oxford, under the command of lieutenant-general Wilmot, threw in a supply of ammunition, and reinforced the garrison with 700 men.

The approaches advanced very fast, the low situation of Reading from the south and west laying it open to the enemy's batteries, which, nevertheless, did no great execution, only one person of note being killed, lieutenant-colonel d'Ewes, a young man of great courage, who lost his leg by a cannon shot, and expired in a few hours.

Vicars says, that, after the besiegers had made themselves masters of Caversham-hill, and had beaten the

enemy from the church in the bottom, on the steeple of which they had planted a piece of ordnance, which was beaten down with the steeple itself, sir Arthur Aston offered to surrender the town, if the garrison might be permitted to march away with bag and baggage; but this was rejected.

Within a week after the beginning of the siege, the governor being in a court of guard near the enemy's approaches, a cannon shot beat down a brick or tile, which struck him on the head, and, by the violence of the blow, so stunned him, that he was disabled from executing any thing in his own person, and his senses were so impaired, that he was even unfit for counsel or direction; in consequence of which the command devolved on colonel Richard Fielding, the eldest colonel of the garrison.

After enduring a fortnight's siege, the garrison became impatient of relief, which they had earnestly solicited before by lieutenant-general Wilmot; and on April the 22d a servant of sir Lewis Dives, named Flower, swam over the Thames, and gave intelligence, that, at such an hour, prince Rupert would attack the enemy's post at Caversham-bridge with a considerable force; during which the garrison might easily send some barges up the river to receive a supply of ammunition, and make a sally upon the same post. Flower was taken by the enemy on his return; and consequently the scheme was discovered. But in Mercurius Aulicus, April 26, it is said that the garrison received sixteen barrels of powder; which relief enabled them to make better conditions than had else been granted.

April 25. About ten in the morning the garrison hung out a white flag, and demanded a parley; but, at this very juncture, the post at Caversham-bridge was attacked by prince Rupert; the king himself being at hand with a part of his army. The action was sharp; but the royalists were repulsed, with considerable loss, a violent storm of hail and rain beating in their faces during the time of the engagement. Vicars says, that "whiles our soldiers were in fight the town was relieved with some little supply; two or

three cart-loads of somewhat or other lightly laden, as appeared by their galloping with their burden to the water-side; but what was in them was not known." It seems by the accounts of each party that the king's approach to the town was after the treaty for a capitulation was begun; but the parliament's account adds, that, colonel Fielding, being pressed by some officers to break the truce, and sally out to join the king's forces, plainly told them, "that if the king himself should come and knock at the gates, and command him to doe it, he would not forfeit his honour, and the faith he had pledged during the truce."

The king retired to Caversham-house, then lord Craven's, and afterward marched to Nettlebed; having determined to make another attempt for the relief of the town, if the treaty for a capitulation should not be ratified; but the next day, April 27, the following articles were agreed upon.

I. That the governor, commanders, and soldiers, both horse and foot, may march out with flying colours, armes, and four peeces of ordiuance, ammunition, bag and baggage, light match, bullet in mouth, drum beating, and trumpet sounding.

II. That they may have free passage to his majesties city of Oxford, without interruption of any of the forces under the command of his excellencie the earl of Essex, provided the said governor, commanders, and souldiers, use no hostility until they come to Oxford.

III. That what persons soever are accidentallie come to this towne, and shut up by the seige, may have like libertie to passe without interruption; such persons only excepted, as have run away from the army under the command of the earl of Essex.

IV. That they may have fifty carriages for baggage, sick, and hurt men: *and that they carry not out of the town of Redding, any such goods and commodities as have been taken from the western carriers, and brought into Reading.*

V. That the inhabitants of the town of Reading may not be prejudiced in their estates or persons,

either by plundering or imprisonment ; and that those who will leave the town may have free leave, and passage, safely to go to what place they will, with their goods, within the space of six weeks after the surrender of the said towne.

VI. That the garrison of Redding shall quit the said towne by twelve of the clocke to-morrow in the morning ; that timely notice shall be given to his excellency when they begin to march, that a guard may be provided for their security. That at the time when the garrison begins to march out of the post towards Cawsom-bridge, there shall be a post open at Newberry-way, for my lord general to passe into the town ;

Signed,

RICHARD FIELDING.	ANTHONY THELWELL.
JOHN BELASYES.	THEOPHILUS GILBY.
RICHARD BELL.	GEORGE BOND.
EDWARD VILLIERS.	

The articles are to be found in Clarendon ; and, with trifling variations, merely verbal, in the newspapers of the times.

When the garrison marched out of the town, and passed through the enemies troops, many were plundered and disarmed ; though both parties allow that the earl of Essex did all in his power to prevent the seizing of any private property, and promised his soldiers 12s. a man, to prevent it. The parliament accounts say, that the soldiers discovered a waggon containing 140 muskets, which was an infringement of the articles of capitulation, and which occasioned the pillage of another waggon. But, whether this, or the unruliness of the common soldiers, produced a breach of the articles, it was the origin of, and became an excuse for, mutual injustice, during the continuance of the war, and particularly at the surrender of Bristol.

“ Coll. Aston came out first, in a horse-litter, covered with red, and lined with white ; after, two coaches and waggons ; and then the horse and foote beate a march, and so departed, with colours flying, towards Oxford, by Casum church.”

After the soldiers entered the town, they plundered four houses; notwithstanding proclamation had been made not to plunder, on pain of death. These were the houses of four persons, called "grand malignants," who had given information to the governor of such inhabitants as were inclined to the cause of the parliament, and who therefore paid a double tax to the weekly contribution. The butchers' stalls were found full of meat, there was plenty of beer and wine in the taverns and ale-houses, together with 70 quarters of oats, and 50 quarters of wheat. The pieces of artillery which were left by the garrison according to the articles of capitulation, were very few for the defence of such a place; there were two large iron cannon, one in "the Fort Royal," the other in "the invincible Fort at Harrison's barn;" six brass sacres; and two small pieces, called drakes. There remained in the stores 28 barrels of powder, and some small quantities in different parts of the town. The parliament affirmed that they lost only forty men during the siege, though the cavaliers shot bullets "chanckt and furred" to do all the mischief possible. With respect to the numbers lost by the besieged we have no information. In the register of St. Lawrence occur only nine burials of soldiers killed, from April the 15th, the day on which the siege began, to April the 30th. The registers of the two other parishes are defective.

In the first moment of triumph, the parliament were as much satisfied with obtaining possession of Reading, as the king was with the recovery of his garrison, which was nearly 4000 men, and which had joined him at Oxford; but in a little time both parties were equally discontented. Those in London censured the conduct of Essex in permitting the garrison to join the king's other forces; while at Oxford it was whispered that Reading had been betrayed, or too easily surrendered. The king himself was much incensed that no provision had been made in the articles of capitulation for those who had deserted from Essex's army; by which means some soldiers were executed after the surrender. This he called giving

up men, who had betaken themselves to his protection, "to be murdered by the rebels whom they had deserted;" and he published a proclamation to vindicate himself from being supposed to withdraw his protection from such as had returned, or should in future return, to their duty.

Colonel Fielding demanded a trial, by a council of war; and defended his surrender of the town by the advantageousness of the articles of capitulation, and the knowledge he had of the king's former intention to reduce the works and evacuate the garrison. He affirmed, that he had no information of the king's approach to relieve the town, till the troops were engaged; at which time hostages were delivered; and he considered it as against the law of arms to break the truce,—that the governor had been acquainted from time to time with the state of the garrison, and the transactions of the siege, and seemed to approve of what was done, though, on account of his indisposition, he would not give positive orders; and, though he refused to sign the articles for that reason, yet he expressed no disapprobation when they were read to him.

Notwithstanding this defence, on an article "for not obeying orders," colonel Fielding was sentenced to lose his head. He was afterwards pardoned, after long intercession to the king in his favour; but his regiment was taken from him, nor was he ever restored to the command, though he afterwards acted as a volunteer, and in several engagements behaved with great spirit and courage.

Great jealousies arose in the army upon this affair, and many who imagined the king's situation to be very low, chose to attribute it to the loss of Reading. Essex still continued there; for he had lost many by sickness during the siege, probably from being encamped on low grounds to the west of the town.* He was detained likewise by the demands of his officers and soldiers for their arrears, being disappointed of 40,000*l.* which was to have been sent by the city; so that it was near six weeks before he removed from Reading.

* On the Battle Farm estate.

Amongst those who served in the besieging army, was Sir Samuel Luke, immortalized and personified by Butler in his "*Hudibras*." Sir Samuel drew up an account of the "beleaguerment" of the town, which Mr. Coates introduced in his work, but the facts vary immaterially from the preceding detail. One portion of it, however, is worth transcribing, and is subjoined:

"18th, Tuesday. The 11th day in the morning, wee sawe the enemies appeare on the other side of the river of Thames, towards Henley, upon Cawsam hills, under the command of generall Ruven; with a great strength both of horse and foote; whoe went to Sonning, which is on the north-east side of Redding, and putt downe the river (as wee heare) into Redding, in boates, some 600 musketeers; with severall waggon loades of ammunition, which wee could not hinder, because we had broken downe Cawsam bridge, till wee had made our quarters sure; working that night against the towne, in our approaches to their works, without the losse of any man on our side. Only, in the morning, sir Anthony St. John's eldest captaine of his excellencies guards, giving fire to a peece, by chance fired the barrells, and blew up the carriage, and killed three or four men outright, hurt himselfe, and a dozen more, though not mortally.

"The king's forces, assone as they had putt their 600 musketeers, with their provision, into Reading, retired back towards Oxford, with their horse and pikemen; soe that we heard noe more of them. All that night we spent in our approaches with little or noe losse, onely one canoneere, which was killed the 19th day in the morning; and, in exchange of him, wee heare that the governor of Reading was eyther killed, or shott in the neck, and hath never been seene since, but all orders and ticketts have passed under the hands of colonell Feilding. But this proved to bee onely that hee had his pate broke with a tile, from the topp of a howse, as hee was walking about to view his works.

"All this while we lay onely on this side the towne; so that the enemy had all the liberty that might be to

walk abroad and take the ayre; driving away cattle, and snapping up our straggling soldiers between Sonning and Southcott, which tyme they managed to their best advantage. By this tyme, the lord Grey appeared before the towne, with three regiments of foote; two consisting of 700 a-piece, and one of 1700; six troopes of horse, of 80 a-piece; two troopes of dragoones; and three pieces of ordnance; which begirt the enemy round from Sonning to Cawsom, northward and southward, being outreacht with as much as nature could afford us; the Thames, Kennett, and the Hallowed brooke, with many little rivers issueing out of them. But all these being fresh-water soldiers, in the evening, hee placed some companies to keepe the guard from making his approaches, and he goeth himselfe to fetch away some regiments that were behind at Maydenhead; and, in the meane tyme, the towne sallyeing out upon them, made our forces retreat in some disorder. That night our forces in his excellencies quarters advanced their batteries, and placed their ordnance within lesse than pistoll shott of one of the enemies bulwarks and batteries, called Harrison's fort; and all this night spent without the losse of a man."

Sir Samuel Luke thus describes the state of the town on its being surrendered to the Parliamentary army:

"At the hower appointed, at ten of the clock, they began to march according to agreement, with their waggons, four peeces of ordnance, flying collours, match lighted, drummes beating, and trumpets sounding: and, as they marcht out at Fryers corner, wee marcht in at the same place. They had only 3 wayes out of the towne, where they built 3 sconces, one at the Forbury, another at Harrison's barne, and another at the end of Pangborne lane.

"We found the towne well provided when wee came in; store of provision, about 20 barrells of powder, 10 brass pieces, their forts were well wrought, and strong both with trenches and pallisadoes; the towne entreucht round; soe that if any man of the parliament's side should have delivered upp a place upon these terms, hee would have deserved noe better

than a halter: for, there were men enow in the towne to have beaten any of our quarters in open field, if they had had eyther spiritt or courage. I must alsoe confesse farther, that our soldiers, assoone as they came into the towne, went to enquire for malignants; but, in a short tyme, were quieted by his excellencyes care and vigilance, hee himselfe goeing in person, from street to street, to appease them."

The town being now entirely in the possession of the "Roundheads," we perceive by Sir Luke's journal, that on the 26th of May, "his excellency began to draw out his forces towards Cawsham, which gave them occasion to call for money; soe that there was a kind of mutiny amongst them for a time; his excellency's regiment and coll. Hampden's being the cheefe muteneers. Nevertheless, with much adoe, his excellency drew out his owne regiment that night to Cawsam parke, with most of the other regiments of the army, onely coll. Hampden's stayed behind, and persisted in its muteny; but hee, with good words and faire language, wrought so much upon them, that hee made them ashamed of their actions, and they marcht cheerefully to Cawsam the next morning.

"His excellency quartered at the lord Craven's house, and his forces round about him in the parke, where they had a very fine and open quarter. Most of the officers, and sir John Meldrum and his regiment, were quartered in Reading. His excellency lay there 10 days, which much refresht our soldiers, and recovered many of that disease and infection which our army received at Reading."*

* "The town of Reading was infected (says Baker, p. 524,) with a pestilential fever, when Essex entered it, which caused a great sickness and mortality amongst his soldiers, besides which, they were much discontented for want of pay, so that when he removed to Cawsam-house to avoid the infection, many of his soldiers unanimously disbanded, and marched away; but though he gained nothing by this town, the murmur at Oxford was great for the losing of it, and Col. Fielding was accused of treachery therein, and, being found guilty by a court-martial, was sentenced to be shot to death, but by the King's clemency he was pardoned."

From May till September the troops of the Parliament held possession of the town; but after the first Battle of Newbury, September 20, Essex fled hither with great precipitation, being dreadfully harrassed in his retreat by Prince Rupert, and more especially near Theale. But his stay was short; he gave his troops only two days' rest, when he evacuated the town, which was immediately occupied by Sir Jacob Astley, and a garrison of 3000 foot and 500 horse. In May, 1644, the King arrived here, and took up his quarters at Coley-house; but on the approach of the armies of Essex and Waller to Windsor and Hartford-bridge, his Majesty ordered the military defences of the town to be destroyed, and removed with the garrison to Oxford. Next day Reading was again occupied by Essex, and remained in the hands of the regicidal government, till the end of the war. Some relics of the fortifications still remain in the Forbury, where were two strong redoubts, the mound of one of which is planted with a few lime trees, and from hence is one of the most beautiful views in the county—the majestic Thames winding its sinuous course from Sonning past Caversham, till it is lost by the intervention of the high lands on the Oxfordshire side. Below the mound is the wall of the Plummery-mead, in which were traces of embrazures till within the last few years. The fortifications at "Harrison's Barn," or the "Invincible Fort," situated at the west end of Castle-street, are completely erased, so as to "leave not a wreck behind." Both of these positions, no doubt, were formidable to a besieging army, and more especially when we recollect the little progress which had been made two hundred years ago in the art of gunnery and the management of heavy artillery. The following document will show the state of the town and the pitiable sufferings of the inhabitants during and after the siege:

"To the King's most excellent majesty.

"The humble petition of the mayor, aldermen, and the inhabitants of the town of Reading, humbly sheweth,

"That your petitioners, in obedience to your majesty's commands, did attend on sir Arthur Aston, governor of the

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said towne, who, in your majesty's name, desired your petitioners to undertake the further monthly loane of 2000*l.* whereas, your petitioners, since the first advancement of your majesty's armie to the said towne, have been charged with neer 4000*l.* besides 1000*l.* contribution for cloth; 4000*l.* loan, and other losses of the inhabitants of the said towne; that your petitioners have bin enforced to engage themselves, and the lands and meanes of the said town, in 1000*l.* for the payment of the said sume, even to the undoing of the said towne.

"May it therefore please your most excellent majesty, the premisses considered, to take into your princely consideration the miserable estate of your petitioners, who, through the general distractions of the kingdom, the decay of trade, the dayly charge of your majesty's army billeted with us, and the miserable cry of the numerous poor, are soe impover'ished, that most of your petic'oners are scarce able to support themselves and their sev'all families with conveniences, altogether unable, tho willing, to supply your ma'tyes com'ands. And therefore hope for your ma'ties excuse therein, and your petitioners shall ever, as in duty bound, pray for your ma'ties longe and happy raigne."

THE KING'S ANSWER.

"At the Court at Oxford, 11 Jan. 1642.

- "His majestie hath taken considerac'on of this petic'on, and com'anded me to give this answer: that, albeit he is very graciously inclined to favour the petic'oners, for many respects; yet, considering his present occasions, he saith he cannot but insist upon the loane of two thousand pounds more. But, for the ease of those who are well-affected in that towne, he requires that such of the inhabitants there as have either contributed to the rebels, or appeared to have been really ill-affected to his majesties person and government, that all such be at least doubly charged; and that, for the rest, his Majestie wisheth that the tax be layed with as much equality as may be. And in these particulars his majestie recom'ends it to sir Arthur Aston, knt. governor of Reading, to give his best assistance to the maior and aldermen of the said towne.

"EDW. NICHOLAS."

In July, 1647, the unhappy King—now a prisoner in the hands of his bitter enemies,—was removed from Windsor to Maidenhead, and from thence to Caversham-house, the residence of the Lord Craven; and

there the fallen Monarch had an interview with his children, owing to the kindly intervention of General Fairfax. It is said that Cromwell was present at one of these afflicting and heart-rending scenes, and described it, to Sir John Berkeley, as "the tenderest sight his eyes ever beheld." It is added, that Sir John actually communicated the observation of the arch-hypocrite to his Sovereign, intimating that Cromwell had also "said much in commendation of his Majesty," and expressed a wish "that God would be pleased to look upon him according to the sincerity of his heart towards the King."*

The general loyalty of the inhabitants—their attachment to Kingly government—were joyfully elicited on the restoration of Charles II. His Majesty was proclaimed with marked solemnity on the 10th of May, 1660, and a stage was "set up for the purpose in the open Market-place," the Mayor's mace altered, and the King's arms engraved upon it. On the 27th of August, the King and Queen honored the town by a formal visit. "The company on foot (it is recorded) attended their coming in the Orte-lane, and upon their approach, mett their Majesties; and after a congratulatory speech by Mr. Steward, presented to the King's Majesty 50 pieces in gold, which cost 22*s.* 2*d.* each, and to the Queen's Majesty 30 pieces of the like gold, in two several purses, curiously wrought, which cost 18*s.*" But there was a tax appendant, which materially deteriorated from the *eclat* of the proceedings: the Corporation had to pay the sum of 37*l.* 6*s.* for "*fees demanded* by his Majesty's servants, upon his entrance and passing through the town."—James II. was in Reading in 1687; and in 1688, the King's army, stationed here, which, on the arrival of the news of the Prince of Orange's approach,

* Those who may be desirous of perusing a formal apology for all the atrocities of the regicides, may refer to Mr. Godwin's work, which is entitled a "*History of the Common Wealth*;" and which is one of the most finished palliatives for rebellion and treason that has been presented to the people of England since the days of Bradshaw, Cooke, and Harrison.

had been ordered to Colnbrook, fell back to Reading on the 9th of December, it being ascertained that it was only a small detachment of the Prince's horse, which had advanced to Newbury. It is certain that the King was in bad odour with the people of Reading; and tradition says, that a tradesman was dispatched in private to the Prince, requesting him to advance and take possession of the town. We are not told that his application was successful; but it is matter of history that a strong military force marched to Reading, to oppose which, a Scotch regiment, commanded by Lord Ogilvie—a veteran of 80 years old, but with all the mental activity of manhood,—was assembled in the Market-place, whilst some Irish dragoons occupied High-bridge. These were routed in the first onset, but were ineffectually rallied by the Earl of Feversham, at the upper end of the town; indeed, their dispersion was complete.* This event was commemorated in a rhyming ballad, called "*The Reading Skirmish*," in which occurs these lines :

Five hundred Papishes came there
To make a final end
Of all the town, in time of Prayer,
But God did them defend.

Not many were killed of the Irish, and fewer taken; eight of the King's troops were killed; and the Court complained that the town's-people had "fired on the army from their windows, whilst the Orange horse charged them in front."†—On the approach of Queen Anne to the town, in October, 1700, the following orders were made by the Corporation: "Ordered, that the Chamberlain do provide forty broad pieces of gold to present to her Majesty, in a new purse,

* An officer of some rank was killed on the part of the Prince of Orange; and Bishop Burnett says he was the "only one killed in the whole expedition."—It is said he was buried in St. Giles's Church; and in the burial list, of the date Dec. 12, 1688, is the entry "Captaine Conaby, of the Pr."

† The anniversary of Reading Fight, as the affair was called, was celebrated by ringing the bells of the different churches, till within the last few years.

being the first time of her progress *through this Corporation*.—Ordered, that Mr. Mayor, the Aldermen, and Burgesses, meet her Majesty on horseback, next Friday, as she passes through this Borough; and also that six persons attend to hold the horses; and also the Town-Attorney (Town-Clerk), and officers likewise attend on horseback.”

Since this period, the Borough has been but seldom visited by “enthroned royalty;” but members of the reigning families have frequently passed through: on the 21st of August, 1738, the Prince and Princess of Wales came to Reading by water: “they diverted themselves upon the Thames in their barge, and sailed up the Kennet as far as High-bridge, where they were received with loud acclamations.”—In 1740, “the Princess Amelia hunted in the neighbourhood; the stag was roused near Billingbear, and ran 50 miles across the country—he crossed the Thames at Reading, Goring, and Whitchurch, and ran towards Aldworth: when he was lost in the woods of Chapel-row. The Princess, on her return, took refreshment at the Crown Inn.”—George II. and III. have passed through the town incog. In 1813, his present Majesty, when Prince Regent, paid a visit to R. Borough, Esq. at Basildon House, accompanied by his royal brother, the Duke of Clarence, and many of the nobility. During their Royal Highnesses stay there, they were waited upon by the Mayor, Aldermen, Burgesses, and principal Inhabitants of the Borough, in a long train of carriages, and many hundreds following on horse-back. An address of congratulation was presented to the Regent by the Mayor, Lancelot Austwick, Esq. in the name of the Body Corporate and Inhabitants generally; and his Royal Highness was pleased to offer the honor of knighthood to his Worship, which mark of condescension the worthy magistrate respectfully declined.

CIVIC GOVERNMENT.

To those who are imbued with a taste for prætorian antiquities, there are few investigations more interesting, than in endeavouring to lift the veil which conceals the origin of civic authority—and more especially of those officers, to whom, either by prescription or charter, are entrusted the conservation of the public peace, and the administration of public justice, in cities and boroughs. The every-day occurrences of our tribunals show, that, notwithstanding the continued enquiries which are making on this important subject—and although several commissions have been formed for the examination of the national records,—it is still one on which much yet remains to be learnt. Reading is a borough by prescription; and there is no doubt but its corporate authority originated, like the municipal establishments of most of our old towns, in a guild-mercatoiry. It is quite certain there was a guild here as early as the reign of Henry III.; this fact is proved by the recitation of the charter of that Sovereign, in the *Inspeximus* of Edward III. which is annexed in the note*—but the probability is, that

* “ EDWARDUS, Dei gratia, &c. Edward, by the grace of God, king of England and France, and lord of Ireland, to all archbishops, bishops, abbots, priors, earls, barons, justices, viscounts, governors, magistrates, and to all our bailiffs, and faithful subjects, greeting.

“ WE have inspected a charter, which the lord Henry of celebrated memory, formerly king of England, our progenitor, made, in these words :

“ ‘ HENRY, by the grace of God, king of England, lord of Ireland, duke of Normandy, of Aquitaine, and earl of Anjou ; to all archbishops, bishops, abbots, priors, earls, barons, justices, viscounts, governors, magistrates, and to all our bailiffs, and faithful subjects, greeting. KNOW YE, that we will, and command for ourself and our heirs, that all the burgesses of Radinge who belong to the guild-merchant in Radinge, may be for ever free from all shires and hundred courts, and from all pleas, (*placitis*) complaints,

it existed as early as the reign of Henry I. perhaps antecedently to the founding of the Abbey. A local historian (Mr. Man) observes, that the guild-merchant was nothing more than "a society of mechanics and tradesmen," formed for mutual advantage, "without pretending to interfere in the government of the Borough;" but this statement is erroneous: there is little reason to doubt that these guilds existed even before the Norman invasion; and in every instance where they were established, the local government was delegated to them. This was the case at London, at York, at Chester, and in most of our ancient cities; and we may take it for granted, Reading did not form a particular exception. The guild was un-

tolls, passages, ways, and carriage ways, and that they may buy and sell wheresoever they will, throughout all England, without paying toll, and no one may disturb them under forfeiture of ten marks. Witness to these presents, the venerable father the archbishop of Canterbury, primate of all England, Richd. earl of Cornwall our brother, Peter de Malund, Richard Fitznicholas, Bertram de Croill, John de Grey, Master William de Kilkenny archdeacon of Coventry, Henry de Wengh, Henry de Bathon, Robert Wale-rand, William de Grey, Nicholas de St. Maure, Imbert Pugeys, William Gerum, Roger de Bovin, and others. Given under our hand, at Portsmouth, the fifth day of July, in the 37th year of our reign.' "

"Now we grant and confirm the above charter, with its contents, to the burgesses of the aforesaid town, their heirs, and successors, being burgesses of the said town, for us and our heirs, so far as the above charter reasonably witnesses; and in like manner as the same burgesses and their predecessors have hitherto used and enjoyed, by these words above mentioned, that is to say, that the said burgesses may be undisturbed in every thing, pleas (*placitis*) only excepted.

"Witnesses to these presents, the venerable fathers, John, archbishop of Canterbury, primate of all England, Richard, of London, Richard of Chichester, bishops; William de Bohun earl of Northampton, Thomas de Bellocampo earl of Warwick, Thomas Wake de Lydell, Richard de Stafford, steward of our household, and others.

"Given under our hand at Westminster, the tenth day of June, in the eighteenth year of our reign over England, and in the fourth over France."

questionably the origin of the Corporation; and the title of "Mayor" succeeded here, as at other places, to that of the "Keeper" or "Warden" of the civic fraternity.—It appears from the charter given in the preceding page, that no judicial power was conceded to the guild; indeed, the paramount authority was especially vested in the Abbot and Monks by Henry I. and the privileges of the inhabitants were insignificant and, considered in a modern point of view, worthless.—Richard II. confirmed the charter of Edward; as did Henry IV. and Henry V. It is in the charter granted by Henry VI. that we first see a recognition of the title of Mayor; and in the subsequent charters by Henry VII. Henry VIII. Edward VI. and their successors, the Body Corporate were stiled the "Mayor and Burgesses." But Elizabeth was the great benefactress of the Corporation: she enlarged their authority, and invested them with estates, formerly part of the Abbey lands;* and repeatedly, during her long reign, visited and resided in the town, a part of the dissolved Monastery being fitted up for her reception, and called the "Queen's House."† She ordained that there should be nine capital and sixteen secondary Burgesses, and that the Mayor, the primary, and secondary Burgesses, should be the permanent Common Council for the Borough," for the better order and government of men residing therein, and of the business of the Borough. It may be well, perhaps, to recite some of the provisions of the Queen's grant to the Corporation:

* It was by this grant that the Body Corporate became liable to the repair and rebuilding of the bridges in the Borough, and to find a school-master for the free-school for ever. In this charter no less than nineteen bridges are mentioned, including the south end of Caversham-bridge, seven in the old road, six leading from Caversham-bridge, two between the old Guild-hall and Garrard's Cross, one in Duke-street, and one over the Malt Mill Brook.

† The range of ancient brick buildings at the north side of St. Lawrence's Church-yard were, in all probability, built in the reign of Elizabeth, and used as, and called, the *Queen's stables*.

“For the repair of the bridges, she gives the Mayor and Burgesses power to cut down and carry 50 trees called timber oaks, 30 thereof in her demesne of Whitley, and 20 others in the parish of Binfield; and to dig, take, and carry away, 200 loads of stones, called ragged, or free-stones, in the late monastery of Reading; and to set to sale, carry away, and take, two cottages or sheds, in the grange of the said late monastery, with the timber and roofs of the same, and the remains of a ruinous house, near the Abbey mill.

“And, in consideration that the mayor and burgesses shall acquit the crown, of ten pounds, to be paid yearly to the master of the free-school within the borough of Reading; and likewise of three pounds paid to the collector of the crown-rents in the said borough; the queen grants to the corporation the said crown-rents, to the amount of 26*l.* 19*s.* 0*d.* She likewise grants them the little Ort, and Ort lands, in Reading; the chapel, and site of the chapel, at Caversham-bridge, and one rood of meadow adjoining, lately in the tenure of William Penyson, *knt.*; and William, marquis of Northampton, lately attainted of high treason; the tolls and profits of two fairs, yearly held *in the outer court, called the Forbury, in the monastery of Reading*, lately in the tenure of the persons above-mentioned; all which had been leased for 21 years to sir Francis Englefield, by queen Mary. The queen likewise grants the quit-rents of the same, being 3*l.* 17*s.* 0*d.* reserving to the crown the annual rent of 7*l.* 17*s.* for the said demesne lands, as it was reserved in queen Mary's lease.

To this is added, “the gate-house, late the computer-prison, and a tenement adjoining, near the monastery; the school-house, then or lately in the possession of Thomas Thackam; the conduit-close, with a tenement and garden; a waste piece of ground, lying by the Vastern, under the wall of the aforesaid monastery; sixteen shops and shambles, in High-street, called the New Shambles; the place called the Hermitage, and half an acre of land, on the west side of Caversham-bridge; the site of the late chapel,

called the Holy Ghost chapel, situate by Caversham-bridge; and a small eyot, formerly in the possession of William Penyson, knt. deceased, parcell of the possessions of the late monastery of Reading; a tenement in New-street, otherwise Frier-street, parcel of the possessions of the late monastery of Notley; and several other tenements belonging to Jesus chantries, in the churches of St. Laurence, and St. Giles; and to Colney's chantry, in St. Mary's; all which, with other emoluments, are valued at the clear yearly value of 41*l.* 9*s.* 7*d.* to be held by fealty only, in soccage, and not in capite, the corporation paying yearly into the Exchequer 22*l.* of lawful money of England."

It is then recited, that, "whereas a school, or grammar-school, founded and built by our predecessors, is in the borough, *for educating the boys of the inhabitants of the said borough, and others, in literature*; we will and grant to the aforesaid mayor and capital burgesses of the borough of Reading aforesaid, that they, and their successors, for the time being, shall, from time to time, when they please, nominate, elect, and appoint, one fit person to be and continue master, teacher, or instructor, in the same school, or grammar-school; and that it may and shall be lawful, for the aforesaid mayor and capital burgesses, and their successors, from time to time, for any reasonable cause, to remove or expel the said master, teacher, or instructor; or to substitute and admit the same, or any other in his place, as it shall seem expedient or necessary to the aforesaid mayor and capital burgesses, or to the major part of them, for the time being."

The subsequent charters* have been so well epitomized by Mr. Coates, that no apology is offered for transcribing his account of them:

* "Chartered rights" have afforded fine scope for the ingenuity and cupidity of those "learned in the law." With respect to the election of a Mayor, under these charters, it has been decided that the majority of the Aldermen or Burgesses *must* be present at such election; and if a charter be *in part* accepted, it is sufficient evidence of its acceptance *in toto*.

THE CHARTER OF KING CHARLES THE FIRST.

The charter of king Charles the First declares the borough of Reading to be incorporated, by the name of the Mayor, Aldermen, and Burgesses, of the borough of Reading, in the county of Berks, and grants them the privilege of a common seal, with power to break, change, or make new the same, as shall seem expedient.

“The number of aldermen, of which the mayor is to be one, is appointed to be thirteen, with twelve assistants; who are empowered to elect a mayor annually, upon the last Monday in August, who is to be sworn before the last mayor, the aldermen, and assistants, and is to enter upon his office on the Monday after the feast of St. Michael, the arch-angel, next following after such election. If the mayor should die, the aldermen are to nominate three, one of which is to be chosen by the rest and the assistants; and, during the vacancy, the senior alderman is to officiate. Upon the death of any alderman, one of the assistants is to be chosen to supply his place; and, on any vacancy, one of the free burgesses of the said borough is to be chosen an assistant by the mayor and aldermen.

“The steward of the borough, who is to be ‘a discreet man, skilful in the law,’ is to be elected by the mayor and aldermen; and two burgesses are to be elected chamberlains, to receive and keep in the chamber of the said borough all, and all manner of, rents, fines, amercements, and revenues, belonging to the mayor, aldermen, and burgesses, of the borough aforesaid, who are to give in their accounts, yearly, to the mayor, aldermen, and burgesses, or to the greater part of them; and their accounts are to be read publicly, on the morrow after the ending of the said account, in the guild-hall of the said borough.

“The coroner for the borough is to be elected by the mayor and aldermen, and is to continue in his office during their pleasure. Three serjeants at mace are to be appointed, by the mayor for the time being, to serve in the courts, and to continue in office during

his pleasure; but other officers are to be sworn by the mayor and aldermen, and, in case of an equality of voices, the mayor is to have a casting-vote.

“A deputy mayor may be appointed by the mayor for the time being, to officiate in case of sickness, absence, or any other impediment; and, if any member of the corporation, duly elected into any office, shall refuse to exercise the said office, he may be fined, and on his refusal to pay the fine, he may be committed to prison, and detained until he hath paid the same.

“It is directed that the oaths of office shall be drawn up by the mayor and steward of the borough, and shall be administered by sir Edward Clerk, the steward appointed by this charter, and Thomas Harrison, gent. one of the first and present aldermen.

“The mayor and aldermen of the borough, or the greater part of them, may remove aldermen, assistants, or chamberlains, from their office, for misbehaviour, or any other just and reasonable cause. No alderman of the borough, unless he is very aged, and hath been four times mayor, nor any assistant, in order to decline the care and burden of government, may go out of the borough, with his family, to make his abode elsewhere, or may leave his office, without the consent of the mayor and aldermen, or the greater part of them; and, if any one shall go out, or leave his office, he may be fined; and, on refusal to pay the fine, may be imprisoned till it shall be paid. Every alderman and assistant is exempted from bearing arms; so that every one so exempt shall provide at his own charge a fit man properly armed, to appear as often as the train-bands shall be mustered.

“Cottages are not to be built, nor large tenements divided into small; no house is to be covered with straw, nor any alien admitted to a residence in the borough, without the license of the mayor and aldermen, and any such person, if admitted, may be expelled by the said mayor, aldermen, and burgesses.

“The mayor, aldermen, and assistants, may meet and make laws for the government of the borough, and of the tradesmen and inhabitants of the same, and of others coming into the town. They may

enact bye-laws for their own regulation, and for the discovery of any fraud or sophistication in the making or compounding of wares; for victualling of the said borough; for better restraint of building of cottages, dividing of tenements, covering houses with straw, receiving of foreigners, ordering, disposing, and demising of lands. And these regulations are to be observed under such pains and penalties as shall be contained in the same laws, ordinances, and provisions; and all fines and amerciaments are to become part of the public stock, and are not to be applied to any private purpose.

“The mayor and deputy mayor, the right rev. the lord bishop of Salisbury, and his chancellor or commissary, the senior alderman, and he that was, or shall be, the last mayor for the time being, and every of them, may and shall be the king’s justices for keeping of the peace within the said borough, two of which may be a quorum, the mayor or deputy mayor being one; and no other justice of the peace is to enter the said borough, or intermeddle therein in any manner.

“And it shall and may be lawful for the said mayor, deputy mayor, lord bishop, his chancellor or commissary, the eldest alderman, and that alderman which was last mayor, whereof the mayor or deputy mayor is to be one, to have, hold, and keep, every year, at the four times of the year, according to the form of a statute in that behalf provided, in the guild-hall of the said borough, or in some other convenient place within the said borough, a general sessions of the peace, in as ample manner and form as justices of the peace in the said county may do and execute.

“A court of record is to be holden on Wednesday in every week, except the weeks of Christmas, Easter, and Pentecost, before the mayor and aldermen, or deputy-mayor and aldermen, or any two of them, whereof the mayor or his deputy is to be one; and, in the same court, they may hold, by plaint to be levied in that court, pleas of debt, trespass, or other personal pleas; so that the debt, damage, or value

demand, do not exceed the sum of ten pounds of lawful money of England; with power of attachment and arrest, in as ample manner and form as is accustomed in the city of London. And if such plaint, cause, or plea, shall happen to be involved in so great doubts and difficulties, that it cannot be fully determined on the said Wednesday, the mayor and aldermen, or deputy-mayor and aldermen then present, may, at their pleasure, adjourn to the next day, or the next court-day, from time to time; and any two of them, whereof the mayor or deputy-mayor shall be one, may proceed to the full hearing and determination thereof, and shall have and receive to their own use the accustomed fees and profits of the said court, and what the same judges in like cases have taken and had, or ought to take.

“Four attorneys of the court are to be appointed by the mayor and aldermen, during pleasure, who shall be sworn to execute their office faithfully, and shall take such fees as the mayor and aldermen shall appoint; and, that all petty differences may be more easily composed between the poorer burgesses, parties may be examined upon oath in the said court of record, and any plaint or suit may be determined; provided the debt, damage, or value, does not exceed the sum of five shillings.

“There is likewise to be held, once in every week, a court called the orphan’s court, for the government of the orphans of freemen or free-women of the said borough, who, by writing, or by their last wills, shall bequeath their goods and chattels to the mayor and aldermen, and shall recommend such orphans to their tuition, according to the ancient custom, and in the same manner and form as the court of orphans in the city of London. Provided always that the said court shall allow towards the education and maintenance of such orphans, according to the rate of four pounds at least in the hundred, for every year, so long as they shall remain in the tuition of the mayor, aldermen, and burgesses, of the borough aforesaid. The mayor, aldermen, and burgesses, are to be responsible and

give security, under their common seal, for restitution of all goods, and for the payment of all sums of money so by them received.

“The mayor for the time being, or his deputy, having taken his oath before the aldermen, shall exercise the office of clerk of the market, and shall have and exercise assize and assay of bread, wine, and ale, and do all things appertaining to the said office, and duly punish the transgression of the said assize of bread, wine, and ale, and correct and amend the defects of weights and measures.

“The mayor for the time being, together with the clerk deputed for taking recognizances of debts, according to the statute-merchant, and the statute of Acton-Burnell, shall have full power to take and receive any recognizances of debts, and to make executions, and do all things respectively belonging to such mayor and clerk, according to the form of the statutes aforesaid.

“The steward of the borough for the time being shall be clerk to the king, his heirs and successors, and shall receive recognizances of debts according to the statutes aforesaid; and the said mayor and clerk shall have a seal, consisting of two pieces, namely a greater and a lesser piece, for the sealing of all recognizances; and that the greater piece of the seal shall remain in the custody of the mayor, and the lesser piece of that seal in the custody of the clerk.

“The mayor for the time being shall be bailiff of all rivers, streams, and waters, running within the said borough, or the limits and precincts thereof; and shall have the survey and conservation of the same, and may take and have, for the use and support of the said corporation, all fines, amercements, and forfeitures, imposed upon any one offending in and about the said rivers, streams, or waters.

“And, whereas the men and free burgesses of the borough ought, and are accustomed, to repair and support the bridges within the precincts thereof, and likewise one half of Caversham bridge, in consideration of the heavy burden which may fall upon them on this account, it is ordered that the mayor, alder-

men, and burgesses, shall receive of all the king's subjects, foreigners to the liberties of the borough, passing the said bridges, for every wain laden, two-pence; and for every horse, laden with a pack, one half-penny; and of the owner or hirer of every barge passing through Caversham-bridge, four-pence. And in order to preserve the certain knowledge of the limits and bounds of the borough, it may and shall be lawful, for the mayor, aldermen, and burgesses, to make a yearly perambulation of the same.

"The mayor, aldermen, and burgesses, have license to purchase and receive, manors, lands, tenements, and hereditaments, not exceeding the yearly value of 500 pounds; and they have confirmed to them, by this charter, all former privileges granted by any charter or letters patent, or by whatever other lawful means, right, title or custom, had or used; or under whatever name or form of incorporation granted; including, by name, "messuages, lands, tenements, waters, water-grounds, tithes, oblations, common of pasture, purprestures, rents, revenues, services, fairs, markets, courts of pie-powder, view of frankpledge, and other courts; return of writs, fishings, waters, conservation of waters, banks, wharfs, keys, tronage, tolls, piceage, stallage, pontage, murage, goods and chattels, waifs, strays, treasure found, fines, amerciaments, profits, commodities, advantages, emoluments, hereditaments, gaols, free-schools, power of naming and removing a master or masters, a teacher or teachers of those schools, authorities, liberties, privileges, rights, jurisdictions, immunities, easements, and exemptions, whatsoever." Dated at Westminster, December 17, 1638, in the fourteenth year of his reign.

This is the governing charter of the borough, subject to some slight alterations made by the charters of the second and tenth years of Charles the Second.

The charter of the second of Charles the Second directs, that the mayor, before he enters upon his office, shall be sworn before the recorder, instead of the last mayor, the aldermen, and assistants, as in the preceding charter; that every alderman and assistant

shall be sworn before the mayor or recorder; and that there shall be a capital steward within the said borough, as also a skilful man in law, who shall be called a recorder. Here these two offices are made distinct, which had been united in the charter of Charles the First.

The charter of the tenth of Charles the Second, after the usual preamble, and confirmation of all former charters and privileges, grants to the mayor, aldermen, and assistants, permission to have and to hold manors, messuages, lands, tenements, rents, and hereditaments, to such a yearly value as does not exceed 1000*l.* after all reprisals; and these must be lands not held of the king in capite, nor by knight's service.

The last clause directs, "that the mayor, aldermen, burgesses, steward, and other officers of the borough, and their deputies, and all justices of peace within the said borough, before they are admitted to their respective offices, shall take the oath commonly called the oath of allegiance, as also the oath of supremacy." And here it is to be observed, that the town clerk, or common clerk, did not appear to be named in any of the preceding charters, though he was an ancient officer of the corporation.

In the reign of James the Second, the corporation of Reading were compelled to resign their charter; as were many other corporate bodies, throughout the kingdom. But, on the 8th of March, 1685, it was restored; and the new charter was brought by sir Thomas Holt, the recorder, and Thomas Coates, esq. It was received, at the confines of the town, by the mayor, aldermen, and all the other officers of the corporation, in their formalities, accompanied by a considerable number of gentlemen, who proceeded to the town-hall, where the charter was read, and the officers therein named were sworn; "and the night concluded with bells and bonfires, and all other expressions of loyalty."

The king, however, did not think the corporation of Reading sufficiently subservient to his purposes; for, on March 16, 1687, they received an order to turn out three aldermen, and to elect three others in

HISTORY OF READING.

; and some of the assistants were displaced
time. In the following year was received
mandatory from king William, ordering John
mayor, to be removed, and Mr. Joseph
chosen an alderman in his room; which
instance of the interference of the crown
to the officers, or the government, of the
n.—The annexed curious document is worth

ACCOUNT HOW THE PERAMBULATION OF THE
LANDS AND LIMITS OF THE CORPORATION OF
READING WAS PERFORMED, ON THURSDAY, THE
1ST OF MAY, 1714.

Mayor and company met at the council-chamber
5 o'clock in the morning, and, being attended by
12 green-coat boys, set out and went to the ut-
ter end of the county of Berks, on that part of Caver-
ham where the two counties of Oxon and Berks are
divided, and from thence we took boat and went down the
river of Thames, on the north-side of the
islands against Brigham's meads, and so through
the Kennet's mouth; and from thence up the
river as far as the north-east end and corner of, the
Orte, having fisht all the waters both in the
Thames, according to our privilege by charter.
Where we landed, we went southward by the
pale and out-bounds of the Orte, to the
way there, which leads from Reading towards
and we drove two stakes into the ground, one on
each side of the highway, which we crossed over at the
end of the lands called Spittle-fields; and so we
went southward by the last part and outward bounds,
the east-side of the hedge of the said Spittle-
fields, south-east part and end of the same fields.
From thence westward by the eastward part of the
south part of the aforesaid lands, where the
ditches there lead to a lane called antiently
now Red-lane,* and so up the said lane south-
westward to the south-east part and end of the lands called the
Orte, and the grove called some time since Gaun-
pice; and from thence westward by the outer
part of the south-part of the said lands and grove, to
the part and end of the Conduit-close.

*Original designation was probably Rood-land—from its lead-
ing to the Red-lane Cross.

“ And from thence we went westward in the highway that leads from Reading to Shinfield, till we came into the road that leads from Reading to Whitley, and then we proceeded by the east side of the highway, and fixt a stake there over against the east-end of a little lane called formerly Perrin’s lane, but since known by the name of Cut-throat-lane, lying next to the King’s-head, on the south-side of the field called Clerkenwell-field.

“ Then we endeavoured, as our charter granted by queen Elizabeth directs, to pass through the whole length of the said lane ; but it being impassable for the mayor, &c. by reason the west end of it was over-run and filled up with brakes and bryers, and the serjeant also could not pass through it, we thought it necessary that the mace, being the ensign of our authority, should be carried through the same, which was performed by a young man named Wm. Champ, of the parish of St. Laurence, in Reading. Then we went by the south part of a certain close there, called Pembard’s ; and so over a certain meadow there, called Landmead ; and so over the river Kennet, to the east end of a certain ditch lying between Vobney mead and Cowley mead. Having passed along the north bank of that ditch, westward, as far as we could, without crossing any other ditch, we turned northward, by the east side of a little ditch that comes from the brook called the Hallowed Brook, to the Foot-bridge, near Cowley ;* and then went westward, and passed through the south-west end of the mansion-house, and through the hall and gardens.

“ And so through all the lands of Cowley westward, till we came to the manor of Southcot, and from thence, northward, by the west part and outer lands of Cowley, near Southcot, to the hedges by the highway there which lead from Reading to Newberry ; and from thence westward to the south-west end part of Pilefield, in Battle, where a stake was fixt in the highway, and from thence, northward, in length, by the outer bounds of all the lands in Battle, as by the hedges and ditches there it is parted and divided between the lordship of Tilehurst, and the aforesaid lands of Battle, into Pangbourn-road ; and turning eastward, we entered, and passed through, a house, called Bargent’s, and so through the garden of the same, and by the aforesaid bounds, till we came round to the house called Battle-farm, now in the possession of Mr. Clenton, who entertained the mayor and aldermen in the said house with

* Coley.

a splendid refreshment, and treated all the whole company that attended them with plentiful cheer.

“ From the said house, we went round the remaining part of the bounds, and so to the river Thames, at Coom-bank, and there took boat again, and rowed through the middle of the river to the north part of the aforesaid Caversham-bridge; where our circuit ended, about eight o'clock at night.”

Nearly all the charters of the town are in excellent preservation, with singularly fine impressions of the seals. The charter of Henry VII. is splendidly decorated; the margins beautifully painted, and the initial letter inclosing a full-length portrait of the King, richly illuminated, and in full regal emblazonry. As a work of art, this curious document will vie with some of the highest finished productions even of the present day.

COMPANIES OF THE GUILD MERCATORY.

It appears that the town was at a very early period divided into five wards, each ward having a trade-guild or fraternity attached to it.

The Mercers and Drapers' Company.

The Cutlers and Bell-founders' Company.

The Tanners and Leather-sellers' Company.

The Clothiers and Cloth-workers' Company.

The Victuallers and Innholders' Company.

These local institutions may be traced to a date nearly as early as the Norman Invasion, and there is good reason to believe that they originated with our Saxon ancestors.—Into one of these five companies every person was required to be admitted before he was free to exercise his trade, and the fines for admission varied from five shillings to four pounds.

In the *Mercers' Company* were included the mercers, drapers, haberdashers, pot'uaries, (dealers in earthenware) chapmen, tailors, and cloth-drawers.

The *Cutlers' Company* embraced the cutlers, bell-founders, braziers, pewterers, smiths, pinners, bar-

bers,* carpenters, joiners, fletchers, (arrow-makers) wheelers, basket-makers, coopers, sawyers, bricklayers, card-makers (for wool-combers,) turners, plumbers, painters, and glaziers.

The *Tanners' and Leather-sellers' Company* included the tanners, leather-sellers, shoe-makers, curriers, glowers, saddlers, jerkin-makers, bottle-makers, collar-makers, and cobblers.†

The *Clothiers' Company* included the clothiers, dyers, weavers, sheer-men, shuttle-makers, and ash-burners.

The *Victuallers' Company* ‡ embraced the vintners, innholders, bakers, brewers, butchers, fishmongers, chandlers, malt-makers, flax-dressers, salters, and wood-mongers.

* In 1443, in the early part of the feuds between the Houses of York and Lancaster, the following order was issued, intended, as Mr. Man suggests, to prevent "unlawful meetings" taking place in the common rendezvous of a barber's shop :

"The Mayor and Burgesses of Reading grant and order, that from this time forward no barber open any shop, nor shave any man after ten of the clock at night, between Easter and Michaelmas, nor after nine of the clock at night from Michaelmas to Easter; but if it be any stranger, or any worthy man of the town, he shall pay 300 tiles to the Guildhall of Reading, as often times as he is found guilty, to be received by the officers for the time being. Soon after this, John Bristol was fined 2100 tiles for shaving seven persons, contrary to the order, but the number was reduced to 1200, on account of his poverty." [This was rather a close shave for the poor barber. At this time thatch was the general covering for all houses, and the object of the fine being paid in tiles instead of money, was, no doubt, to introduce their use as a means of preventing fire.]

† The rules of this company are worth noticing for their liberality : No one was allowed to make shoes, excepting in Shoemakers-row, which extended from the east side of the street from the Forbury gate, to the Hallowed brook : no foreigner allowed to sell, unless on the fair-day ; shoemakers to board and lodge their journeymen in their own houses, if unmarried ; no bull or bear-baiting allowed during divine service on Sunday. What opinion will the piety of our day entertain of the necessity of such a restriction?

‡ In the reign of Elizabeth, the price of ale and beer was, for double beer, 8s. per barrel, or 2½d. per gallon ; ale, 4s. per dozen ; small beer, 4s. per barrel : the retail price was, best beer one penny the full quart, small beer a half-penny.

At this time (Eliz) the number of free men in the different companies was as under :

Clothlers	26	Cloth-drawer	1
Dyers	3	Cutlers	4
Weavers	30	Bell-founders	3
Sheermen	30	Braxlers and Pewterers	6
Shuttle-maker	1	Smiths	9
Ash-burner	1	Pinner	8
Tanners	12	Barbers	5
Shoemakers	12	Carpenters	10
Curriers	2	Painters	2
Glovers	9	Joiners	4
Saddlers	5	Fletchers	3
Jerkin-makers	2	Wheelers	2
Collar-makers	2	Basket makers	3
Cobblers	11	Coopers	3
Mercers	15	Sawyers	7
Drapers	6	Bricklayers	8
Potteries	2	Card-makers	2
Haberdashers	8	Plumber	1
Chapmen	8	Turner	1
Hosier	1	Glaziers	2
Tailors	35	Bottle-maker	1

Making a total of three hundred and one individuals free of the Guild Merchant.

We have before adverted to the extraordinary secular privileges granted to the Monastery by its royal patron—privileges which, in fact, placed the paramount judicial authority completely in the hands of the Abbot: he was empowered to hold courts not only for the punishment of ordinary offences, but even for the trial of capital charges,—the magisterial authority of the mayor, was little more than nominal, and the corporation were, in a great measure, merely dependents on the Abbey. As might be supposed, such an anomalous state of things gave rise to continual disputes, and appeals to the superior tribunals from the oppressive decisions of the monastic courts, were by no means unfrequent. The Abbot claimed the right of electing the mayor and burgesses, and acted upon it; he did not condescend to take the opinion of the town on such elections, and in all probability the persons he appointed were sufficiently obnoxious to the inhabitants of the borough. At last, temp. Henry VII. the corporation resolved to lay their grievances before Fox, then Bishop of Winchester, and Sir Charles Daubeny, the Lord Cham-

berlain; the result was, that the Guild Mercatory, as a body corporate, was formally acknowledged—and instead of the Abbot nominating the mayor, the burgesses were to select three persons, one of whom was to be appointed by the Abbot to that office. But, in other respects, the dependency of the borough on the monastery was confirmed; it was ordered that “all the elections be made in the lete (let) and law-day of the seid Abbot of *his seid town* ;” and no person could be admitted to the freedom of the borough without giving formal notice to him, in order that he might share in the fine. The dissolution of the monasteries, however, in the next reign, put an end to this degrading servitude, and as the power of the Abbot declined, that of the body corporate arose, and gradually settled down to the authority and privileges which, with few exceptions, they now possess.

With respect to the Guild Mercatory, a few further remarks may suffice: It has been well observed, that although their controul in the town was very limited, yet, as it respected their own members, they assumed a despotic authority: they elected such freemen as they pleased to the subordinate offices of the corporate body, and if they refused to take the oaths, fined them at their discretion; and it was not till 1673, that the amount of the fine was specifically fixed at 40*l.* and soon afterwards reduced to 20*l.* The fine inflicted on an alderman, who declined the office, was also arbitrary, sometimes being fixed at 20*l.*, and at others at 100 marks. In 1642, Mr. Edward Hamblin, who was elected alderman, refused the oaths, when he was fined 100 marks, and, refusing payment, was committed to the Compter prison—a gate-house, between St. Lawrence's church, and the present public-office, leading into the Forbury. He was a royalist, but was eventually discharged, after compounding for his estate with the regicide commissioners, in the sum of 36*l.* 6*s.* 8*d.* Occasionally, the corporation proceeded to disfranchise and expel refractory members. We have an instance before us of a political offender—a free-spoken personage, like the Burdetts or Hunts of the present day:

"Inasmuch as Joseph Saunders, one of the said burgesses, for sedition, and slanderous and opprobrious words, by him openly spoken against the King's* honorable council, by their commandment was committed to punishment on the pillory, on the market-day, and there to stand all the market time, and then *both his ears cut off*: And after, for other seditious, lewd, and slanderous words, by him at sundry times after that spoken, to the great perturbation and disquietness of his honest neighbours, it was therefore thought fit, by the said mayor and burgesses, that the said Joseph Saunders be no fit man to continue of the said company—whereupon the said mayor and burgesses, with one assent and consent, for the causes aforesaid, the said day and year, have expelled and discharged the said Joseph Saunders, from the said hall and company for ever."

Amongst other absurd privileges claimed by the Guild, as we have before noticed, was that of prohibiting any one to exercise his trade or calling in the town, unless he had been previously admitted to the freedom of the company; and we have a remarkable instance on record, of the exercise of it in the person of a poor barber:

"July, 1545.—Robert Hooper, a barber, being a *foreigner*, [i. e. a non-resident, or stranger] was this day again ordered to be gone out of the town at his peril, with his wife and children."

The process after this order was summary and effectual: the town serjeants were commanded to shut up his shop, and see him and his family beyond the borough limits. Thank heaven, with all the absurdities which still appertain to corporate rights, such acts of abominable tyranny are no longer tolerated. The different gradations and distinctions of trade were closely watched: there was a line drawn to mark the boundary between the trade of the carpenter and the joiner, a line which, in these happier days, it would be difficult to describe; and the sawyers were restricted from meddling with either of them. In like manner, the shoe-makers were prohibited from mending, inasmuch as that would trench on the mechanical rights of the worshipful Company of Cobblers.

—* Edward VI.

When all these restrictions on the "free-trade" of the borough ceased to exist,* cannot now be ascertained with any degree of accuracy, but certainly more than a century has elapsed since the obsolete authority of the Guild Mercatory has been exercised—and the town is open to the establishment of any trade or business, be the parties originating them residents or "foreigners."

LIST OF MAYORS.

The following is a list of Mayors of the Borough, from the erection of the office by charter, 1st Henry IV. to the year 1831. Such as have a star prefixed to their names have been Members of Parliament for the Borough of Reading:

FIRST OF HENRY IV.	
1399 * Robert Hay	1420 William Wynton
1400 Robert Hay	1421 William Huntingford
1401 John Huntingford	1422 * Robert Morris, jun.
1402 Robert Markham	1423 * Thomas Levington
1403 * William Kennet	1424 * Simon Porter
1404 * John Hunt	1425 John Burton
1405 John Hunt	1426 Thomas Levington
1406 John Hunt	1427 * John Kyrkby
1407 Robert Markham	1428 Simon Porter
1408 John Hunt	1429 John Kyrkby
1409 * William Wynton	1430 * Simon Kent
1410 * Robert Levington	1431 * Simon Ladbroke
1411 John Huntingford	1432 John Kyrkby
	1433 Robert Mores
HENRY V.	
1412 Robert Hay	1434 John Kyrkby
1413 William Huntingford	1435 Thomas Swayne
1414 * John Clarke	1436 William Hunt
1415 William Kennet	437 William Hunt
1416 * John White	1438 W. Brussel, or Bryssely
1417 John Hunt	1439 William Selham
1418 R. Morris, or Mores	1440 John Veyr
1419 William Wynton	1441 Robert Morys
	1442 Simon Porter.

* It is to be hoped the phrase "free-trade" will not be understood according to its modern political acceptation. Such "free-trade" is already proved to have been the greatest curse that ever befel the country, and is quite worthy of the quacks and heartless "liberals" from whom it emanated.

1443 William Selham
 1444 Edward Lynacre
 1445 William Bryssely
 1446 William Hunt
 1447 John West
 1448 John Sayer
 1449 Thomas Clerk
 1450 John Chamberlain
 1451 Simon Porter
 1452 Edward Lynacre
 1453 William Rede
 1454 William Rede
 1455 William Rede
 1456 William Rede
 1457 John Chamberlain
 1458 * Thomas Beke
 1459 Thomas Beke
 1460 * Thomas Clerke

EDWARD IV.

1461 Thomas Clerke
 1462 Thomas Beke
 1463 William Lynacre
 1464 William Rede
 1465 Thomas Clerke
 1466 John Buck
 1467 William Rede
 1468 William Lynacre
 1469 William Rede
 1470 John Upston
 1471 Robert Queddington,
 or Quedhampton
 1472 William Lynacre
 1473 John Upston
 1474 William Pernecott
 1475 William Pernecott
 1476 Stephen Dunster
 1477 William Lynacre
 1478 John Baxter
 1479 John Baxter
 1480 William Lynacre
 1481 Thomas Mill
 1482 Stephen Dunster

EDWARD V.

RICHARD III.

1483 John Baxter

1484 John Langham
 1485 John Langham

HENRY VII.

1486 John Langham
 1487 The same
 1488 The same
 1489 The same
 1490 John Baxter
 1491 * Christian Nicholas
 1492 The same
 1493 The same } but no re-
 } turn by the
 1494 The same } Abbot
 1495 John Baxter
 1496 The same
 1497 Christian Nicholas
 1498 * Richard Cleche
 1499 Christian Nicholas
 1500 John Wilcox
 1501 Thomas Puckerage
 1502 Richard Cleche
 1503 John Turner
 1504 Thomas Carpenter
 1505 Richard Cleche
 1506 Thomas Carpenter
 1507 Christian Nicholas
 1508 Thomas Carpenter

HENRY VIII.

1509 Thomas Carpenter
 1510 William White
 1511 William Gifford, or
 Jefford
 1512 William Watts
 1513 * William Justice
 1514 John Pownsar
 1515 John Hopton
 1516 Thomas Bye, who died
 Dec. 27, and was succeed-
 ed by William Justice
 1517 William Watts
 1518 William Watts
 1519 John Hopton
 1520 William Giffard
 1521 Thomas Everard
 1522 * Nicholas Hyde

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1523 Richard Turner | 1561 *Thomas Conyers |
| 1524 William Giffard | 1562 John Bell |
| 1525 Thomas Everard | 1563 John Buckland |
| 1526 Richard Aman | 1564 John Phipps |
| 1527 Richard Turner | 1565 John Kendrick |
| 1528 John Vansby | 1566 Richard Watlington |
| 1529 Thomas Everard | 1567 Thomas Turner |
| 1530 Richarn Aman | 1568 Humphrey Jackson |
| 1531 Richard Turner | 1569 Richard Johnson |
| 1532 William Style | 1570 Robert Bowyer |
| 1533 John Rede | 1571 * Thomas Aldworth |
| 1534 Thomas Everard, who
died in his mayoralty and
was succeeded by Richard
Turner, for a quarter of a
year | 1572 John Ockham |
| 1535 Richard Aman | 1573 William Lendall |
| 1536 John White | 1574 Richard Watlington |
| 1537 Richard Turner | 1575 Edward Butler |
| 1538 Thomas Mirth | 1576 Richard Aldeworthe |
| 1539 * Richard Justice | 1577 William Fyneemore |
| 1540 * William Edmunds | 1578 Richard Johnson |
| 1541 Richard Turner | 1579 John Webb |
| 1542 John White | 1580 Thomas Kendrick |
| 1543 Richard Turner | 1581 Edward Butler |
| 1544 John White | 1582 Richard Watlington |
| 1545 Richard Justice | 1583 Elizeus Burges |
| 1546 * John Bourne | 1584 Richard Aldworthe |
| | 1585 Richard Turner |
| | 1586 William Fynnemore |
| | 1587 Richard Johnson |
| | 1588 Thomas Lydall |
| | 1589 Richard Watlington |
| | 1590 Robert Harris |
| | 1591 Thomas Deane |
| | 1592 Elizeus Burges |
| | 1593 Richard Aldworthe, he
died in his mayoralty, and
was succeeded by Richard
Watlington |
| | 1594 Richard Turner. |
| | 1595 Robert Reve |
| | 1596 Barnard Harrison |
| | 1597 Thomas Lydall |
| | 1598 Robert Harris |
| | 1599 Thomas Deane |
| | 1600 John Blage |
| | 1601 Edward Burningham |
| | JAMES I. |
| | 1602 John Webb |
- EDWARD VI.
- 1547 John Bourne
- 1548 * John Bell
- 1549 John Buckland
- 1550 William Edmunds
- 1551 * Thomas Aldworth
- 1552 John Bourne
- QUEEN MARY
- 1553 * Robert Bowyer
- 1554 Edward Butler
- 1555 John Bell
- 1556 Thomas Turner
- 1557 Thomas Aldworth
- QUEEN ELIZABETH
- 1558 Robert Bowyer
- 1559 Edward Butler
- 1560 Thomas Turner

- 1603 John Ball
- 1604 John Thorne
- 1605 Bernard Harrison
- 1606 Thomas Lydall
- 1607 Nicholas Gunter
- 1608 Thomas Deane
- 1609 John Blage
- 1610 Edward Burningham
- 1611 Thomas Turner
- 1612 Richard Turner
- 1613 Robert Reeve
- 1614 William Malthus
- 1615 Robert Knight
- 1616 Christopher Turner
- 1617 William Ironmonger
- 1618 Nicholas Gunter
- 1619 Walter Bateman
- 1620 Thomas Turner
- 1621 Anthony Knight
- 1622 Robert Malthus
- 1623 Robert Knight
- 1624 Christopher Turner

CHARLES I.

- 1625 William Ironmonger
- 1626 Nicholas Gunter
- 1627 Nicholas Gunter
- 1628 Nicholas Gunter
- 1629 Walter Bateman
- 1630 Thomas Turner
- 1631 John Newman
- 1632 William Kendrick
- 1633 Robert Malthus
- 1634 Robert Kent
- 1635 John Dewell
- 1636 George Thorne
- 1637 Anthony Brackstone
- 1638 Richard Burren
- 1639 John Jennings
- 1640 Thomas Harrison
- 1641 Peter Burningham
- 1642 Thomas Thackham
- 1643 William Brackstone
- 1644 Simon Dee
- 1645 George Wooldridge
- 1646 Richard Holloway
- 1647 John Harrison

THE COMMONWEALTH.

- 1648 Thomas Bateman
- 1649 Peter Thorne
- 1650 James Arnold
- 1651 William Wilder
- 1652 John Webb
- 1653 Henry Frewin
- 1654 William Mills
- 1655 Thomas Cope
- 1656 Richard Aldwright
- 1657 Richard Holloway
- 1658 Joel Stephens
- 1659 Joel Stephens

CHARLES II.

- 1660 Robert James
- 1661 Samuel Jemmat
- 1662 George Thorne
- 1663 Thomas Sickes
- 1664 Thomas Clenton
- 1665 Robert Creed
- 1666 * Thomas Coates
- 1667 Wm. Brackstone, jun.
- 1668 Robert Tirrell
- 1669 Michael Reading
- 1670 Thomas Tilleard
- 1671 John Blake
- 1672 Richard Johnson
- 1673 Giles Pocock
- 1674 Samuel House
- 1675 George Goswell
- 1676 R. Thornborough
- 1677 Henry Stead
- 1678 Thomas Harrison
- 1679 David Webb
- 1680 Francis Terrell
- 1681 Michael Reading
- 1682 John Thorne
- 1683 John Blake

JAMES II

- 1684 William Lambden
- 1685 Richard Johnson
- 1686 Giles Pocock

The Charter was surrendered.

- 1687 Thomas Goswell

WILLIAM AND MARY.
 1688 Hugh Champion was
 nominated; but, on the
 restoration of the Charter
 by king James,

Charles Calverley was
 chosen and served
 1689 Francis Terrell
 1690 John Thorne
 1691 Richard Lambden
 1692 John Saunders
 1693 John Thorne, jun.
 1694 James Quarrington
 1695 Samuel Watlington
 1696 William Moore
 1697 Thomas Oades
 1698 Francis Browne
 1699 Thomas Terrell
 1700 Francis Morgan

QUEEN ANNE.
 1701 Robert Noake
 1702 John Merrick, M. D.
 1703 William Wilder
 1704 Moses Gill
 1705 Luke Wise
 1706 John Abery
 1707 Francis Bristow
 1708 Thomas Piercey
 1709 Robert Parren
 1710 Robert Blake
 1711 Samuel Watlington
 1712 Thomas Terrell
 1713 John Merrick, M. D.

GEORGE I.
 1714 William Wilder
 1715 Moses Gill
 1716 Luke Wise
 1717 John Abery
 1718 Thomas Piercey
 1719 Robert Parran
 1720 Robert Blake
 1721 Richard Richards
 1722 John Watts
 1723 William Everett
 1724 Luke Wise

1725 John Abery
 1726 Thomas Pearcey

GEORGE II.
 1727 Richard Richards
 1728 John Watts
 1729 William Everett
 1730 Jeria Ironmonger
 1731 John Thorne
 1732 Thomas Noake
 1733 John Abery
 1734 Abraham Watlington
 1735 Edward Lambden
 1736 John Spicer
 1737 Thomas Pearcey
 1738 Richard Richards
 1739 William Everett
 1740 Jeria Ironmonger
 1741 John Thorp
 1742 John Abery
 1743 A. Watlington
 1744 John Spicer
 1745 Richard Tilleard
 1746 Wm. Armstrong
 1747 John Dredge
 1748 John Harrison
 1749 Thomas Flory
 1750 John Richards
 1751 John Hocker
 1752 Harry Austin Deane
 1753 Ben. Armstrong
 1754 Richard Fisher
 1755 A. Watlington
 1756 John Spicer
 1757 Richard Tilleard
 1758 John Hocker
 1759 John Dredge
 1760 John Richards

GEORGE III.
 1761 Harry Austin Deane
 1762 Richard Fisher
 1763 Richard Westbrook
 1764 Francis Whitchurch
 1765 Richard Tilleard
 1766 John Coates
 1767 Adam Smith

1768 William Blandy	1801 Richard Westbrook
1769 John Dredge	1802 Richard Richards
1770 John Richards	1803 Lancelot Austwick
1771 Richard Fisher	1804 George Gilbertson
1772 Richard Westbrook	1805 John Stephens
1773 Francis Whitchurch	1806 Martin Annesley
1774 William Blandy, sen.	1807 Richard Maul
1775 John Deane, sen.	1808 Thomas Gleed
1776 John Everett	1809 Charles Poulton
1777 Edw. Skeate White	1810 William Blandy
1778 William Knapp	1811 Richard Westbrook
1779 Thomas Deane	1812 Lancelot Austwick
1780 Robert Micklem	1813 George Gilbertson
1781 Edward Micklem	1814 W. Andrews, sen.
1782 Henry Deane	1815 John Blandy
1783 Martin Annesley	1816 Wm. B. Simonds
1784 John Deane, jun	1817 Thomas Sowdon
1785 John Taylor, M. D.	1818 Robert Harris
1786 Thomas Hanson	1819 Thomas Ward
1787 John Bulley	
1788 Richard Maul	GEORGE IV.
1789 Thomas Gleed	1820 Wm. Stephens
1790 William Knapp	1821 Henry Deane
1791 Thomas Deane	1822 Thomas Garrard
1792 Robert Micklem	1823 W. Andrews, jun.
1793 Henry Deane	1824 Henry Simonds
1794 Martin Annesley	1825 Herbert Lewis
1795 John Bulley	1826 George Higgs
1796 Richard Maul	1827 William Quelch
1797 Thomas Gleed	1828 Musgrave Lamb
1798 Charles Poulton	1829 Thos. G. Curties
1799 Thomas West	
1800 William Blandy	WILLIAM IV.
	1830 J. J. Blandy.

The following (says Mr. Man) is the present mode of electing the Mayor : On the day of election, which always takes place on the first Monday after St. Bartholomew's day, the aldermen being assembled in the council chamber, choose three of their members to be put in nomination to serve the office, this done, they all retire into the town hall, where the nomination is proclaimed; they then return to the council chamber leaving the three candidates in the hall, where being re-assembled, they, together with the burgesses, elect one of the three to be Mayor, which is generally in rotation. However, from the adoption of this mode it

is evident, that by the reduction of three of their brethren, who are thus excluded from voting on this occasion, the choice of the Mayor for the ensuing year, greatly depends on the burgesses, supposing the whole number to be present ; the latter being twelve in number, the former only ten.

JURISDICTION OF THE MAYOR.

There is no doubt that the local authorities at one period possessed extensive rights on the river ; but by the operation of the several acts of parliament which have been passed for the improvement of the Thames' navigation, they have sunk into disuse, and have been abrogated. This jurisdiction extended even beyond Henley, to Marlow and Cookham ; and it is conjectured,* that Maidenhead-bridge was the boundary. It is certain the corporation exercised their right by keeping swans on the river, in various places ; for in the early part of the 16th century (1522) Richard Beme, the keeper, in his return, stated, that there were at Hambledon-mills two white swans, at Kellerman three, at Marlow-bridge one, and one at Cookham. This is the more worthy of notice, inasmuch as the corporation of Henley now claim the conservancy of the river, for a considerable distance in front and beyond the town northwardly ; yet it would appear that the Mayor of Reading had then a paramount jurisdiction. But so far back as 1457, the mayor farmed the swans on the Thames, then only eight in number, to Thomas Benwell, who took upon himself all attendant charges, and was to pay yearly to the mayor three cygnets. This agreement, however, was cancelled, and at last the care of the swannery was confided to a regular keeper, with a salary of 20s. yearly. Till the reign of James II. the corporation claimed toll for all barges passing under Caversham-bridge, but it was resisted by some Oxford barge-masters, and, on a hearing in the Exchequer, the right of toll was annulled.

* Man.

HIGH STEWARD, RECORDER, &c.

The present High Steward of the Borough, is that excellent nobleman, the Viscount Sidmouth. The office is one of considerable antiquity; and the following list of those who have had the honor of filling the situations of High Steward and Recorder, is, we believe, tolerably correct:

HIGH STEWARDS.

1540 Thos. Lord Cromwell	and was succeeded by B.
1566 The Earl of Leicester	Whitelocke, Esq. Lord
1588 Sir Henry Neville	Keeper, afterwards Lord
1588 The Earl of Essex	Whitlock
1614 Robt. Earl of Banbury,	1674 Henry Earl of Claren-
stiled the "Lord Knolles"	dön
1630 The Earl of Holland	1716 William Earl Cadogan
1654 Robt. Hammond, Esq.	1798 The Right Hon. Henry
he died in the same year,	Addington.

RECORDERS.

1560 John Ockham, Queen	1687 Thomas Pettit, Esq.
Elizabeth's Charter	1720 Richd. Pottenger, Esq.
— Edward Clerke	1739 Charles Hopson, Esq.
1606 Edward Clerke, jun.	1755 John Dalby, Esq.
knighted in 1625	1768 T. S. Dalby, Esq.
1638 Sir Thomas Manwar-	1779 John Simeon, Esq.
ing, knight	1812 Chas. Abbott, Esq. (af-
1645 Daniel Blagrave, Esq.	terwards Lord Tenterden)
1656 Richd. Bulstrode, Esq.	1817 W. Bolland, Esq. (af-
1658 Daniel Blagrave, Esq.	terwards Baron Bolland)
1660 Edward Dalby, Esq.	1830 H. A. Merewether, Esq.
1685 Sir Thomas Holt	Serjeant at Law.
1686 John Dalby, Esq.	

It does not appear that any especial duties were or are attached to the office of High Steward—although it is probable, as he was originally appointed by the Abbot, that he occasionally presided in the paramount civic court of the monastery. It is pretty certain, that in the beginning of the sixteenth century, both the Steward and Recorder were considered high official personages, and in 1510 were appointed to administer the oaths to the Mayor and Burgesses. Soon after this, their duties were more defined: the

Under-Steward, or Recorder, presiding in the Law Courts of the Borough—whilst the office of High-Steward became, as it is now, a mere honorary distinction. There can be little doubt, however, that at one period he was considered as an useful local appendage to the royal influence, and as a necessary check on the almost regal authority of the Lord Abbot. This may be more than inferred by a reference to the illustrious names at the head of the preceding list—the proud and powerful minions of four successive sovereigns, and the obsequious creature of a regicide dictator.—After the period of turmoil which prevailed during the reign of the two Charles's and of James, the judicial offices of the Borough were managed in a way more consonant with the privileges which the British constitution extends to all those who have the happiness to live under it, and the place of High Steward became merely nominal. Indeed, of so little importance was it for a long period considered, that from the death of the Earl of Cadogan, (who was elected in 1725,) to 1798, when Mr. Addington, now Lord Sidmouth, was chosen to the office—an interval of nearly seventy years,—the place remained altogether vacant.*

Some rather extraordinary—we cannot say *ex officio*,—acts, have, nevertheless, marked the proceedings of those who have been appointed High Steward. In 1539, the assent of Lord Cromwell was to be obtained previous to the election of a Mayor; but, it has been well observed, this proves nothing as to particular right, for Cromwell was the Visitor-General of the suppressed Abbeys, and as the Abbots had, antecedently, nominated the Chief Magistrate, the proceeding might have originated in an ecclesiastical, not in a civil, exercise of expiring power. It may, nevertheless, be understood, that the High Steward has

* A local and generally well-informed historian says, that when the question of Mr. Addington's appointment was mooted in the corporate conclave, it was carried by a very small majority, not out of any disrespect to Mr. A. but the office was considered quite unnecessary!

frequently been the medium of communication between the Corporation and the Crown; and we find that, temp. Charles I. the Earl of Holland was deputed to inform the King, that the Borough was totally unable to pay the quota of ship-money demanded from it. In 1622, the Earl of Wallingford assumed the authority of granting a license to John Bunsday, to kill flesh meat in Lent; and, in the same year, he took upon himself to decree, that the salary of Sir Edward Clerke, the Recorder, should be "six pounds per annum, according to the opinion of the counsel they had sent him." It would seem that Sir Edward was dissatisfied with this decision, for he contrived to exact larger fees, till at last he was ejected, and Mr. Saunders, M. P. appointed in his place; and notwithstanding his repeated and urgent applications, he was not restored to the office till 1625, and was then obliged to submit to the rather galling condition of associating Mr. Saunders with him in office, as well as in profits. But this duplicate Recordership terminated with the renewal of the charter by Charles I. when Sir Edward Clerke's sole authority was formally acknowledged.

It appears that the first High-Steward, appointed by the Body Corporate, *ex officio*, was in the time of Henry VIII. soon after the Abbey was dissolved, when Lord Cromwell was elected. The earliest notice we have of the fact, is contained in the Corporation records, where we find he attended the election of Mayor in 1539. The fall of that clever but pusillanimous minister, in the following year, is matter of national history. From that period till 1566 no mention is made of the office, and the probability is, that it was not occupied; it was then filled by Leicester, the Queen's favourite, who retained it till his death, in 1588.* Sir Henry Neville succeeded; and

* The Royal favourites, two centuries and a half ago, were differently treated to those of the present day: although Elizabeth's attachment—we may say her affection—to the Earl was notorious, we nevertheless find, that at his death, all his effects were publicly sold to *pay his debts to the Crown*.

his successor, the Earl of Essex, was complimented by the subserviency of the Body Corporate, with the "privilege" of nominating *one* of the members for the Borough, and afterwards it was claimed by him and others, who followed in the office, as one of the "prerogatives" of the Stewardship. This was one proof of the wisdom of our ancestors, in the "golden days of good Queen Bess." The fate of the "unhappy favourite" is well known: he was beheaded for endeavouring to excite insurrection in London, by means which showed that he was eminently entitled to the restraint of a strait-jacket. The Earl of Banbury, next in succession, not contented with the nomination of one member, was desirous of returning both of the Borough Representatives; the Corporation had the spirit to oppose the design of the ambitious Peer, and he tendered his resignation with true aristocratical hauteur,—not, however, without condescending to name Richard Earl of Holland, as High Steward, which was readily acceded to.—Smollett describes Richard as one of the "worthless favourites" of the Scotch Solomon,—whilst Whitelock says, he was "a noble gentleman, full of generosity," and so forth. Like other "generous" beings of the present day, he contrived to amass an enormous fortune; and when the troubles broke out in the reign of Charles I. he evinced his gratitude to the cause of royalty, by joining the implacable enemies of that unfortunate Monarch. In 1643, however, he ratted from the "Roundheads," and went over to the Royal garrison of Wallingford, and, it would seem, remained faithful to the Sovereign, for soon after the decapitation of the King, he was brought before Bradshaw and the sham High Court of Justice, and sentenced to lose his head, which was executed on the 9th of March, 1649.* The office now remained vacant five years; and in 1654, it was conferred on

* Clarendon says, he was so weak on the scaffold, that he could not have lived much longer; and when his head was cut off, little blood flowed.

Colonel Hammond, one of the most obsequious tools of the regicide Dictator ; but he retained the place two years only, and was succeeded by another of Cromwell's followers—Bulstrode Whitelock. At the Restoration, he retired to his house near Henley, and then Henry, second Earl of Clarendon, was appointed. Previous to the election of Mr. Addington, in 1798, the freedom of the Borough, in a gold box, was presented to him.

RECORDERS OF READING.

This office is distinctly recognized in the charter,* which directs that he must be a discreet man, learned in the law, and fit: the Corporation have the power of dismissing him.—The following were the duties especially imposed on the Recorder, in the sixth of Elizabeth :—

“Imprimis. That he, or his sufficient deputy, shall be present at every court to see justice indifferently administered to all parties.

Item. That he make out, in the mayor's name, all precepts, warrants, attachments, distringas, and levies, according to the order of the law.

Item. That he, as in him shall lie, shall foresee, that the said mayor in all things be saved harmless, as well concerning the execution of the court, as the execution of the clerk of the market, and also as justice of the peace, so that the said Mayor will be advised by him.

Item. That he in all causes, concerning the commonalty of the hall, as return of writs for the parliament, supplications and letters, be general solicitor, and in all causes concerning the mayor and burgesses and commonalty of the hall, as well within the town as without, so that always if he be about any such business forth of the town, his costs and charges always to be borne, that is to say, for every day, two shillings and eight-pence.

* He was described as *Steward or Recorder*.

park of the Abbot, extending to the high grounds in Whitley, and embracing a large portion of the land now occupied as wharfs, and the Orts' fields;—that the latter were included in its precincts, may be more than inferred from Leland's Itinerary: "In enterynge the town from Sunning, there is a parke longyng to the late Monasterie there."

The Abbey was surrounded by a massive wall, commencing in the yard of the Saracen's Head, from the north side of the Holy-brook,* and running in a nearly straight northerly direction across the site of part of the church of St. Lawrence, past the front of Dr. Valpy's house, to the north-east corner of the Forbury; it then took an easterly direction, interrupted only by the ancient gateway leading into the King's-mead, to the extremity of the present wall of the gaol, when it turned to the south, and terminated at the north bank of the Kennett—the whole including an area of at least twenty-six acres. Besides the gate just now noticed, leading towards the meadows, and after the suppression of the Abbey, called the *Hole-in-the-Wall*, there were three other gates: one where the wall commenced near the Holy-brook, remains of which are still to be traced; a second at the entrance into the Forbury from the Market-place, between the present Compter† and the Church of St. Lawrence; the third at the entrance into the Forbury, near Blake's bridge, on the Kennett. The principal gateway to the domestic buildings of the Monastery, still remains in tolerable preservation,‡ although most barbarously patched with brick and flints, and forms a distinguished feature in the varied views from the Forbury, or fore-court of the Abbey. The outer arch, to the north, is in the Anglo-Norman style, but certainly not of that age, being, in all probability, rebuilt after the original form, about the fifteenth century. The arch springs from clustered pillars, bending inwards

* In Speed's Map of Reading, 1610, it is called the *Hallowed Brook*.

† Occasionally used as a prison.

‡ A North View of the Gate is given at page 71.

considerably at the base. The arch to the south is circular. Amongst the ornaments which adorned the southern front of the gate, there still remain a mutilated figure of a fox, and a dolphin and portcullice,—the latter the cognizance of the House of Lancaster. There is another circular arch midway in the passage, and here was placed the gate, and in all probability a portcullice. This judicious position of the gate, it has been well observed, was admirably calculated to afford a place of shelter for those who had business to transact, either from the outer or inner court; as in the larger division of the thoroughfare, were two doors, one on each side (now blocked up), communicating with the porter's lodges. But it is pretty evident that the building altogether stood detached from what may be termed the secular buildings of the Monastery, although it is probable that at this gate were presented to the "Lord Abbott" the three good and able burgesses, one of whom, under the decree, temp. Henry VII. he was to select for Mayor of the Borough. A local historian* observes, "it is doubtful whether there was any well belonging to the Abbey at its first erection; one has since been discovered in the cloisters, which is now filled up with rubbish; but it is probable this was of later date, as it is not, we believe, usual to find wells in such situations." But this statement arises from error: the fact is, wells are frequently to be seen in the cloisters of monastic buildings, in the centre of which the *lavatory* was generally situated, which it was necessary to supply with water from such resources. However, it is pretty certain, that a great portion of the supply of water was obtained from the "Conduit," still remaining on Mr. J. J. Blandy's premises at Mount Pleasant; and it is stated,† that "as some labourers were making a saw-pit about the middle of the last century, at the eastern extremity of Mr. W. Blandy's wharf, on the south side of the Kennett, they discovered a leaden pipe, about two inches diameter, lying in the direc-

* Man.

† Ibid.

tion of the Conduit, and passing under the river towards the Abbey," part of which, from its situation under the water, still remains there, and the other they sold.*

The foundation Charter of the Monastery gave a plenitude of power to the Abbot. The Monks were to be two hundred in number, but like many public institutions in the 19th century, the establishment was frequently shorn of its "fair proportion" of the resident church militant; for we find, in an Inq. temp. Edw. III., that then there were only one hundred Benedictine Monks on the establishment. The amplitude of authority—almost regal—vested in the Abbot and brotherhood, will be best seen by a perusal of the foundation Charter, a translation of which we subjoin.

CHARTER OF HENRY I.

Henricus, Dei Gratia, &c. Henry, by the grace of God, king of the English, and duke of the Normans, to all his archbishops, bishops, abbots, earls, barons, and to all christians, as well present as future, health.

Know ye that three abbeys, in the kingdom of England, were, for their manifold sins, formerly destroyed; that is to say, Radynge, Cholsey, and Leominster, whose lands and possessions have, for a long time, been usurped and alienated by laymen. I, therefore, by and with the advice of the Bishops and others, my faithful subjects, for my soul's health, and the souls of King William my father, of King William my brother, of my son William, and of queen Matilda my mother, of queen Matilda my wife, and of all my predecessors and successors; have built a new monastery at Radynge, in honor, and in the name of the ever blessed Virgin Mary, mother of God, and of St. John the evangelist; and have endowed it with the said monasteries of Radynge, Cholsey, and Leominster, with their appurtenances,

* The conduit spring, sanctified, of course, according to the superstitious belief of the day, by its appropriation to the sacred purposes of the Monastery, was held in high estimation for its various sanative virtues, and more especially for its cure of sore eyes; it is certain the water is peculiarly pure, and its temperature exceedingly cold.

woods, fields, and pastures, with their meadows and rivers, with their mills* and fisheries, and also with their churches, chapels, cemeteries, oblations, and tythes, and with one mint at Radynge. I have also given to the said monastery Thatcham, and the church of Wargrave, with the said full and absolute power as I myself possessed them, so to remain to the abbot and monks of Radynge.

No person, either great or small, may demand any thing, by custom or violence, as due from the men, lands, or possessions, of the said monastery, nor the levying of men, on account of any expedition, construction of camps, or building of bridges.

They shall not demand of them horses, carriages, or boats, labor, tributes, or gifts; but the monks of Radynge, their servants and possessions, shall be free from all tributes, taxes, and all other customs, by land and by water, in passing bridges, and in the sea ports throughout all England.

And the abbot and his monks shall have power to try all offences committed within and without the borough, in the highways, and in all other places, whether by their own servants or strangers, with all causes which can or may arise, with socca and sacca, tol and theam, and infangentheft, and outfangentheft, and ham socna, within the borough and without the borough, in the roads and footpaths, and in all places, and with all causes which do or may arise.

And the abbot and his monks shall hold courts of justice for trials of assaults, thefts and murders, for the shedding of blood, and breaches of the peace, and all other crimes, in the same manner as belongs to the royal authority; and if the abbot and monks shall in any case neglect to do justice, the king may compel them to do it, so as the right of the church of Reading may in no case be infringed.

And the men of the neighbouring manors shall come to the hundreds courts of Reading and Leominster, according to the custom of former times; and if they shall refuse to come, the king shall receive their fine, and compel them to appear and to perform their duty.

We decree also, as well in respect of the ecclesiastical as regal power, that whenever the abbot of Radynge shall die, all the

* The abbey Mill is situated a short distance below the great gateway on the south side; it is built of flint, stone, and wood, and is turned by the waters of the Holy-brook, a stream which diverges from the Kennett at Langley-mead, near Theale, then running a circuitous course to Coley, passes in nearly a straight line to the mill. In its way under the town, it is arched over in many places; and there is little doubt but what it was originally constructed, at least from Coley, as a canal, by the monks, purposely for the supply of the mill, as well as for the use of the abbey.

possessions of the monastery wheresoever situated, shall remain free and entire, with all its rights and customs, in the hands and at the disposal of the prior and chapter of the monks of Radynge. But this also we determine and appoint to be for ever observed, that seeing the abbot of Radynge has no revenues but what are in common with his brethren, therefore whoever by divine consent and canonical election, shall be made abbot, shall not bestow the alms of the monastery on his lay kindred, or any others, but for the entertainment of the poor and strangers.

He may not enfeof the assessed land, (terrass censuales) nor shall he make knights,* but, in the holy garment of Christ; he must be careful in his acceptation of children, but he may receive aged and discreet people, as well laymen as clergymen.

No person shall hold any of the possessions of the abbey of Radynge wholly (absolutum) in fee, but shall pay to the abbot and monks an annual rent and service.

None shall hold any office by inheritance, in the house and possessions at Radynge, belonging to the abbot and monks, but the abbot and monks shall take cognizance of every principal (præpositer) or other officer, and remove them when they think fit.

I give, and confirm for ever, to this monastery of Radynge, and to whatever belongs to it, all the above immunities, free and undiminished; which, for the sake of God, I recommend to all those kings of England who shall reign after me to preserve; that God may preserve them for ever.

But if any body shall knowingly presume to infringe, diminish, or to change, this our foundation charter, may the

* *Nec faciat milites.* These were spiritual, not secular knights, or such as were created by kings, as Mr. Tate observes, who in treating of this clause in the charter, gives the following explanation of the passage:—"Though I restrain you from making knights, yet my meaning is not to restrain you from making all kind of knights. The making of secular knights to defend the realm, by service done by themselves in person, or by others in their behalf, I will reserve to myself, and secular men; but the making of knights to do service to Christ, whether they be clerks or laymen, I leave free to you, so you make none but such as purpose to take upon them the habit of your profession, advising you only to be very sparing in receiving infants into the profession of your order, that are unable to judge themselves how they shall have power to perform their vows." Sir Francis Legh also observes, "that besides knights of a higher degree, the abbot made inferior ones, who were always remaining in the house of the abbot, and in the *Book of Reading*," he adds, "their diet, with the manner of their allowance in the abbot's houses, is set down, and their place before esquires, so that these milites there made and harboured, could not have been soldiers."—*Antiquarian Discourses.*

great God of all *withdraw and eradicate him and his posterity, and may he remain without any inheritance in misery and hunger*; but, whosoever shall preserve the above-mentioned liberties to the abbey of Radynge, may the Most High, who ruleth the hearts of men, confirm to him all good things, and preserve him for ever.

I Henry, &c.—Here follows the names of the queen, the pope's legate, three archbishops, eight bishops, five abbots, and ten noblemen, viz, Robert, earl of Gloucester; William, earl of Surrey; Roger, earl of Warwick; Stephen, earl of Albemarle; William, earl of Tancarville, the chamberlain; Brien-fitz-count, countess of Wallingford castle; Humfrey de Bohun; Robert de Haia; William fitz-Odo; and Hugh Bigot; who witnessed the charter, which is dated in the year 1125.

The following letter of Pope Innocent III. will afford a satisfactory illustration of the power assumed by the papal church, in the beginning of the 13th. century:—

To the abbot of Radynge and his brethren, as well those present as the future, professing a regular life for ever.

We, though undeserving, are assumed to the dignity of chief pontiff, by the disposal of the divine mercy, that we might, with a partial care, and tenderness, employ ourselves for the state of all the churches, and afford them the patronage of the apostolical see, that God may be the more worshipped in them, the more quiet they are from the molestation of evil minded persons.

Therefore, my beloved sons in the Lord, we have, out of our clemency, yielded to your desires, and do take into St. Peter's and our protection, the above named monastery of St. Mary of Radynge, of the cluniac order, wherein you are devoted to the divine obedience, and do confirm the same by the privilege of the present writing. Appointing first, that the monastic order, according to God, and the rule of St. Benedict, which is instituted in the monastery, be inviolably preserved there for all succeeding times.

And further, that all possessions of goods, which the monastery now possesses, justly and canonically, or that hereafter by the grant of pontiffs, the bounty of kings or princes, by the gift of the faithful, or by any other just methods, with the help of the Lord obtained, shall remain firm, and untouched, to you and your successors, among which we thought proper to remark these, by our express words; Radynge, Cholsey, and Beominster, with the churches, chapels, church-yards, tithes,

offerings, together with the woods, fields, pastures, meadows, waters, mills, fish-ponds, or fisheries, with all other the appertenances, Thatcham with its appertenances, and the church of Wargrave, Whitley with its appertenances, Wichbury with its appertenances, Blewbury with its appertenances, the land which you have in Henrede with its appertenances, Tockenton with the church of the same village and all its appertenances, the churches of Stanton, of Haneborke, and of Inglesfelde, with their appertenances, Dudlesfaude with all its appertenances, the land which you have in Heitum with its appertenances, also the land which you have in Lingeborche and in Stratfield, which was Hugh de Mortimer's, and in Ebricheteswerde with all their appertenances, the lands and rents which you have in London, and Berchamstede with their appertenances, the land which you are possessed of below the tenement of Hon, in the name of the dower of your church, with its appertenances, the priory of May with its appertenances, and Lindgross, in Scotland, with its appertenances.

Also, let no one presume to demand or extort from you, the tenth of your ploughed lands, which you till with your own hands, or at your expence, or of the teaths of the increase of your cattle.

But when there shall be a general interdict of the kingdom, you may, after shutting your gates, and keeping out the excommunicated, and interdicted, without tolling the bell, celebrate divine service in a low voice.

We do also, by our apostolical authority, inhibit any one to publish a sentence of excommunication, or an interdict against you, or your monastery, without a manifest and reasonable cause, or to oppress you with new and undue exactions.

We command, also, the chrism, or sacred oil, for the consecration of churches, or for the ordination of monks, and others of your clerks, who shall be promoted to holy orders by the bishop of your diocese, provided he be a catholic, and has the grace and communion of the apostolic see, to be given to you gratis, and without any abuse.

Furthermore, we do, by apostolical authority, forbid any one building a church or oratory, within the parishes of your churches, without the consent of the bishop of the diocese, and the chapter of Radyng; the privileges of the Roman pontiff, notwithstanding, being preserved.

Also, being willing to provide for your peace and tranquillity for the future, by our fatherly care, we do, by our apostolical authority, forbid any one to commit rapine or theft, put fire, shed blood, rashly to seize or kill any man, or act any violence, within the limits or places of your granges; and, further, we do, by our apostolical authority, confirm, and, by the privilege of the present writing, do strengthen all liberties, and immunities, granted by our predecessors, Roman pontiffs, to your

monastery, and also all liberties, immunities, and exemptions from secular exactions, which have been granted to you, by kings and princes, and others of the faithful.

We do therefore decree it to be unlawful for any person whatsoever, rashly to disturb the monastery, or to take away its possessions, or to keep them when taken away by others, to lessen them, or molest them with any manner of vexation, but that they shall all be preserved entire for the government and support, and all other general uses, of those for whom they were given: the authority of the apostolical see, and the canonical power of the bishop of the diocess being preserved.

If therefore any ecclesiastical or secular person shall, knowingly, endeavour rashly to controvert these our constitutions, after the second and third admonition, and doth not amend his fault, by making a proper satisfaction, let him be deprived of the dignity of his power or honor, and know that he is guilty before God, for the iniquity he hath committed, and is debarred from partaking of the most sacred body and blood of God, &c. until his punishment. But the peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with all those, who preserve all the laws to this place, &c. to the end. Amen.

Given at the Lateran, by the hand of John of Mary in Cormidin, cardinal deacon, chancellor of the holy Roman church, the 10th of the kalends of April: of the indiction the 9th of the incarnation of our Lord 1207, and of the pontificate of our Lord, pope Innocent III. the 10th year.

The annexed order of Edward III. vesting to the abbey the authority and privilege of a mint, is interesting, as it respects the monetary history of the county generally:—

Rex dilecto sibi Johanni de Flete, &c.

The king, to his well beloved John de Flete, keeper of our mint in London, health.

Whereas, by our charter, we have granted to our beloved in Christ, the abbot and monks of Radyng, that they and their successors for ever, may have one mint, and one die at the aforesaid place (locum) of Radyng, there, for money, viz. as well for the coining of farthings (obolos), half-farthings (ferlingos), as for pennies (sterlingos), as the manner is for coining, and as is more fully expressed in our aforesaid charter. We command you therefore, that without delay you cause to be made and fabricated, at the expense of the abbot, three dies, of hard and competent metal, viz. one for pennies, another for farthings, and a third for half-farthings, for the coining of money at the said place of Radyng, and with whatsoever impression and circumscription the abbot shall order; and to

send them to our treasury at Westminster as soon as possible, that from thence, within fifteen days next after the feast of St. Martin, at the farthest, they may, for the cause aforesaid, be delivered to the abbot.

T. J. de Shardiche, apud Westminster, the 18th of November, in the tenth year of our reign.*

The abbots possessed several country seats, or, as they were then generally termed, *granges*. Bere Court, near Pangbourn, was the favourite residence of Hugh Faringdon, the last ill-fated abbot. In the east window of the domestic chapel or oratory there, was his portrait in stained glass, in the monastic costume, kneeling before a book, the words "*In te Domine speravi*," issuing, in a scroll, from his mouth.

* On the subject of local coinage, Mr. Man observes, "This privilege, however, they seem to have used very sparingly, as only one doubtful specimen of the abbey coin is now found in the cabinets of the curious, and not even one has been found within the town itself, where, if they had ever been in any numbers, some of them must, in the course of three or four centuries, have been discovered."—"Mr. Coates has given an engraving, in his History of Reading, of what he supposes to be an abbey penny; but there is reason to think, from its similarity to all the pieces coined in the reign of the Edwards, that it is nothing more than the common coin of the kingdom, struck at Reading, it being usual in those times, for such pieces to be circumscribed with the names of the places they were coined at, as villa Kingston, villa Carlisle, &c., and in like manner, villa Radinge on this, may only denote its having been coined here. Had it been coined by the abbot, it is reasonable to suppose, it would have been denoted either by the name of the abbot, or *œnbbulum Radgnye*, as they were authorised to do by the above order, and not merely by *villa*, which signifies the town only. The real difference between this and the common coin is, that instead of the three pellets in each of the four compartments on the reverse, this is supposed to have the representation of a scallop shell in one of them. I have not seen the piece in question, and therefore cannot say if the engraving is a fac-simile or not, but allowing it to be so, it is not a sufficient proof of its being an abbey penny, because, if meant to represent the abbey arms, all the three scallop shells would have been represented, which might as easily have been done as one. For these reasons I am inclined to think, that this supposed abbey penny is no other than the common coin of Edward IV. to which except in the single cockle-shell, it is perfectly similar."

Bere Court is now the property of J. S. Brendon, Esq. The other principal seats of the monks were at Bucklebury and Whitly.

LIST OF THE ABBOTS.

1. The first abbot was Hugh, the prior of Lewes; in 1129, he was made bishop of Rouen.
2. Ausgerus, or Aucherius; he founded the hospital of St. Mary, for lepers, near, or probably on, the present site of St. Lawrence's church.* He died in 1135.
3. Edward; who died in December, 1154.
4. Reginald; died February, 1158.
5. Roger: in 1163, the abbey church was dedicated by Thomas à Becket.†
6. William, afterwards (1173) archbishop of Bourdeaux.
7. Joseph; then
8. Hugh II. who founded the hospital near the abbey gate, for the entertainment of the poor. In 1199, he was made abbot of Cluney.
9. Helias, 1213.
10. Simon; died 1226.
11. Adam de Lathbury, prior of Leominster, d. 1238.
12. Richard, late sub-prior.

* The rules of this hospital are worth recording:—"According to the original institution, every leper was allowed half a loaf a day, half a gallon of middling beer, five-pence a month for meat, seven-pence for their servants, and every year a cloak, a vest, a mantle, two shirts, and all other wollens. The rules of the hospital were, that if any brother was found guilty of adultery, or struck another in anger, he was to be expelled. They were to rise at the first ringing of the bell, to go to church. He that gave another the lie, was to fast the whole day on bread and water; if he resented it, he was to fast the second day; and if he was still angry the third day, to loose the charity for forty days. No one was to go abroad without a companion. If any thing were given to one abroad, it was to be in common, unless given particularly by kindred or friends. None were to go abroad without leave, nor into their laundresses' houses without a companion.

† Henry II. and a great number of the nobility were present. It would seem, therefore, that the church was in course of building nearly forty years.

Rules well known & interesting. History but not very interesting. Rules that were not recorded in local history.

13. Adam; resigned 1249.
14. Adam II. sacrist of the monastery.
15. William, sub-prior of Coventry.
16. Richard; died 1261.
17. Richard de Radyng.
18. Robert de Burghare, 1287
19. William de Sutton, 1305.
20. Nicholas de Quaplode, 1327.*
21. John Appleford. 1360.
22. William de Dumbleton, 1368.
23. John de Sutron, 1378.
24. Richard de Yately.
25. Thomas Earle, 1430.
26. Thomas de Henley, 1445.
27. John Thorne, 1486.†
28. John Thorne II. 1519.
29. Thomas de Worcester.
30. Hugh Faringdon; in whose time (1539) the abbey was dissolved. He was a man of exemplary character, and highly spoken of by the commissioners of suppression; refusing, however, to acknowledge the religious supremacy of that execrable monster, Henry VIII. he, and two of his monks, Onion and Rugg, were hanged and quartered as traitors, in Nov. 1539, just seven months after his resignation of the abbacy. The following is given as the "Civil List" of the abbot:—

<i>Per Ann.</i>		<i>Per Ann</i>	
	<i>s. d.</i>		<i>s. d.</i>
The marshal, or master of the horse		Dean of the wardrobe,	8 0
The panterer,	8 0	Hostler,	1 0
Dean of the Chambers,	8 0	Baker,	4 0
Porter,	8 0	Second and third ditto,	4 0
The pages,		First smith,	13 4
The cook,		Second ditto,	6 6
The scullion,	1 2	Keeper of the abbot's palfrey,	4 0
Dean of the Chambers,	8 0	Gardener,	4 0
Butler, or manciple,	4 0	Miller,	2 0
Second and third ditto	4 0		

* This abbot founded the lady chapel, in 1314.

† In his time the free-school was founded.

Besides these, there were numerous other subordinate officers; and when the household, in the time of Quadplode, was put on an economical establishment, the abbot retained nearly forty servants. The revenues, at the dissolution, produced from 24,000*l.* to 28,000*l.* per annum, according to the present value of money.

The rental of the dissolved abbey, as returned by the Commissioners, in 1539, was as follows:—

A schedule of the late dissolved monastery of Reading, 31st of Henry VIII.

	£	s.	d.
Cholsey manor and rectory with their appertinances	201	16	0
Blewbury manor with its appertinances	121	4	0½
East Hendred manor, given by the Empress Maud,	38	14	9
Burhidebury manor and rectory,	50	0	8½
Thatcham rectory, with Greenham, Midgeham, Crookham, and Colethorp,	101	6	6
Pangbourne manor,	24	8	4
Basyldon manor,	6	5	5
Shyningfield, or Shinfield, tenements and land,	9	6	0
Sonning, manor of Bulmershe and lands,	7	6	8
Weregrave rectory	30	0	0
<i>Borough of Reading.</i>			
Rent of assize,	21	12	5
Customary rents,	92	18	4
Mills. Two grain mills and fulling mills, called St. Giles's mills, with the tythes of the same; a fishery called Tan-lock; two other mills, and a fulling mill, in St. Mary's parish, called Mynster-mills, and fishery called Grey's lock.	40	0	0
<i>Reading Deanery.</i>			
Rents in Tilehurst, Whitley, Coley, Greyshall, Stratfield, Mortimer, Sulhamstead, Beenham Ufton, battel (farm)	130	9	1½
The farm of Windsor Underore.	6	10	10½
The manor of Whitley,	26	18	4
Agistment of Whitley Park,	3	0	0
Calcot mill and lands in Tilehurst parish,	2	13	4
Fishery of the Kennet,	0	13	4
Rectory of Beenham,	2	6	8
Rectories of Tilehurst, Coley, and Whitley,	20	0	0
<i>Town of Reading.</i>			
Tolls of the fairs,	1	1	4
Tolls of the market,	0	7	0

Cheaping-gavel,	.	.	.	.	0	12	11
Perquisites of courts,	.	.	.	.	2	17	2
Bailiwick of the Liberty,	.	.	.	.	1	2	0
Perquisites of its courts,	.	.	.	.	0	9	10
<i>Sussex.</i>							
Duddlesford manor,	.	.	.	.	0	12	9
<i>Warwickshire.</i>							
Rowington manor and rectory,	.	.	.	.	73	10	0
<i>Wilts.</i>							
Manor of Whitesbury,	.	.	.	.	21	19	8
<i>Kent.</i>							
Manor of Windhull,	.	.	.	.	38	0	0
<i>Oxon.</i>							
Stanton-Harcourt rectory,	.	.	.	.	30	0	0
Lands in Sewell,	.	.	.	.	6	0	0
<i>London.</i>							
Divers tenements, particularly one called Red- yng-place, in the parish of St. Andrew, near Baynard Castle, reserved to the use of the abbot,	.	.	.	.	5	0	0
Summa,	.	.	.	.	12	0	0
<i>Herts.</i>							
Sebrightford manor,	.	.	.	.	6	2	0½
Aston manor,	.	.	.	.	36	19	11½
<i>Bedfordshire.</i>							
Houghton manor,	.	.	.	.	10	15	11
Small rents collected by the bailiff, or out- steward, in Tyglehurst and other places,	.	.	.	.	5	13	10
<i>Pastures and Meadows.</i>							
Cowick,	.	.	.	.	4	13	4
Estmede, near the road to Caversham	.	.	.	.	8	0	0
Three fields called Crown-field, Burfield, and the Grove and lands called Spittlefields,	.	.	.	.	6	8	4
An inn in Reading called the Crown,	.	.	.	.	3	6	8
Tanner's mead	.	.	.	.	1	19	0
Meadows in Battel,	.	.	.	.	2	10	0
Meadows in Sulhamstead,	.	.	.	.	1	0	0
A tenement called the Hind's head,	.	.	.	.	1	6	8
Tithes of Mote-hall in Tyglehurst,	.	.	.	.	7	0	0
Tithes of West-wood-row, in the same,	.	.	.	.	1	6	8
Tithes in Northcot,	.	.	.	.	2	2	0
Tithes in Whitley,	.	.	.	.	0	6	8
Tithes of meadow near Reading called Frogmarsh,	.	.	.	.	0	8	0
Tithes of Cowick,	.	.	.	.	1	3	4
<i>Possessions of the office of Almoner.</i>							
Rents of assize in Reading,	.	.	.	.	6	1	0
Customary rents there,	.	.	.	.	23	15	4
Manor of Burghfield,	.	.	.	.	15	0	0
Pension from the vicar of St. Lawrence's in Reading,	.	.	.	.	5	0	0

Possessions of the office of Cellarer.

Rents of assize in Reading,	0	7	5
Customary rents,	0	13	4
Rents of assize in Sheffield, Calcot, Wokefield, Caversham, and Cold-Norton,	13	8	11½
Customary rents in the same,	7	18	2
A sheepcote and lands in Sewell, and Little Tew in Oxfordshire,	6	0	0
Pension from the abbot of St. Augustin, in Bristol,	13	6	8

Belonging to the office of Sacrist.

Rents of assize in Reading	1	7	6
Customary rents there,	4	16	0

Pensions from the following Churches.

St. Gile's Reading,	2	0	0
St. Mary's,	2	0	0
Sulhamsted rectory,	2	0	0
Englefield rectory,	0	13	4
Compton vicarage,	0	8	0
Hamborough rectory,	1	10	0
Sulham rectory,	0	4	0
Purley rectory,	0	2	0
Beenham vicarage,	0	1	0
Pangbourn rectory,	1	12	8
Wargrave vicarage,	1	0	0

Belonging to the Refectory.

Rents of assize in Reading,	0	9	8
Customary rents there	0	10	0

Belonging to the office of Sub-prior,

Rents of assize,	0	3	4
In Blewbury,	0	18	0
In Sheepbridge,	0	13	0
A building in the Market-place,	0	13	4
Rents of tenants, copy-holders,	5	18	0

Belonging to the office of Granetary.

Rents of assize,	0	10	10
Customary rents,	11	11	4

Belonging to the office of Woodfolder.

Rents of assize,	0	5	0
Customary rents,	13	6	4

Belonging to the keeper of the chapel of the Virgin Mary.

Rents of assize,	0	16	3½
In Burgfield	0	3	0
In Tilehurst,	0	0	6
Customary in Reading,	12	10	8

	1391	0	10½
From the priory of Leominster,	480	0	0
Peserved annuities to the monks	59	13	4
Pensions to the abbots from rectories	87	12	1

Total . £2018 6 3½

As might be supposed, there was no lack of superstitious rareties and reliques in such a splendid establishment—the inventory filled four sheets of paper; and amongst other curiosities equally genuine, are described, “the wing of the Angel who brought over the point of the spear that pierced Jesus Christ”—a vast number of “pieces of the true cross”—and the “hand of St. James.*” Hoveden thus describes the latter: “Rex vero anglorum Henricus, præ gaudio *manus beati Jacobi apostoli*, allata ad eum per Matildem Emperatricem, filiam suam fundavit nobilem Abbatium de Redinges, et eam bonis multis ditavit, et in ea manum beati Jacobi Apostoli posuit.”

The armorial bearings of the abbey are carved on the side of the west door of St. Lawrence's church, *azure*, three escallop shells, *or*. The common seal represented on one side the figure of the Blessed Virgin between St. James and St. John; reverse, Henry I. the royal founder, sitting in kingly state, the sceptre in his right hand, the monastery in his left hand, St. Peter and St. Paul on either side. †

In the time of Elizabeth, the abbey was the occasional residence of the “Virgin Queen;” and in the reign of James I. Camden describes it as “a royal seat, with fair stables, and princely and most generous steeds.” The dwellings on the north side of St. Lawrence's church-yard occupy the site of these stables.—Speed however places them at the farther end of the Saracen's Head yard.

In the Exchequer Record Office are preserved the following papers, relative to the Abbey of Reading:—

Carta regis Abbati de Radynge de libertatibus. Trinitatis Recorda 17 Edward III. Rotulo.

Carta Abbati de Radynge pro Terris in comitatibus Berksiræ, et Herefordiæ, irrotulata, Trinitatis Recorda 20 Edward III. Rotulo.

* See note p. 73.

† The Rev. W. Nares' account of the discovery of the supposed coffin of Henry I. will be found in the note appended to pp. 10 and 11.

Carta regis Abbati de Radynge. Paschæ Recorda 20 Edward III. Rotulo.

Carta regis Abbati de Radynge in comitatu Berksiræ facta Hillarii Recorda 5 Richard II. Rotulo. Remen regis.

Confirmatio Cartarum de libertatibus Abbati de Radynge Comitatu Berksiræ concessa. Michaelis Recorda. Ist Henry V. Rotulo 11

Carta regis de confirmatione libertatum Abbati et Conventui de Radynge. Michaelis Recorda. Ist Henry VI. Rotulo 10.

Carta regis de confirmatione de libertatibus Abbati et Conventui B. Mariæ de Radynge facta. Hillarii Recorda 8 Henry VI. Rotulo 1.

Carta regis de confirmatione libertatum Abbati de Radynge facta. Hillarii Recorda 8 Henry VIth. Rotulo 4 vel. 21.

Carta regis Abbati de Radynge de libertatibus facta. Paschæ Recorda 48 Henry VI. Rotulo 7.

Carta confirmationis privilegiorum Abbatis et Conventûs de Radynge in Comitatu Berksiræ. Hillarii Recorda 3 Edward VI. Rotuo 10.

Finis solutus per Abbatum et Conventum de Radynge pro confirmatione labertatum. Originalia 2 Henry VIII. Rotulo 57.

Carta regis de libertatibus concessa monasterio de Radynge Abbati et Monachis per Henricum filium regis Wilhelmi irrotula Michaelis Recorda 13 Henry VIII. Rotulo 23.

Carta regis de libertatibus Abbati et Conventui de Redinge concessa. Paschæ Recorda 18 Henry VIII. Rotulo 7 et l. pars originalis 34. Henry VIII. Rotulo 75.

The Abbey also possessed the patronage of the following livings, amounting, in number, to twelve, the whole of which paid pensions to the Abbot.

The Vicarage of Buckleberry.

The Vicarage of Thatcham, with the Chapels of Greenham and Midgam.

The Vicarage of Beenham Valence.

The Vicarage of St. Giles,
 The Vicarage of St. Lawrence, } in Reading.
 The Vicarage of St. Mary,
 The Vicarage of Warfield *alias* Burfield.
 The Vicarage of Wargrave.

The Vicarage of Cholsey, with the chapel of Moulshord.

The Vicarage of Tilehurst, (where the Abbot was appropriator.)

The Vicarage of Stanton Harcourt, (in Oxfordshire.)

The Vicarage of Rowington, (in Warwickshire.)

The patronage of Eye vicarage with its seven chapels and of Leominster Vicarage, which paid a Mark yearly to the Abbot, was enjoyed by the priory of Leominster, in Herefordshire, which was a cell to Reading.

The Benedictine monks, to which order, it has been already observed, this Abbey belonged, derived their title from St. Benedict, a native of Nuria, in Italy, who was born about the year 480, and who commenced in his boyhood a life of rigorous devotion and retirement, from which he reluctantly withdrew, at the solicitations of the monks of the Monastery of Sublaco, to become their Abbot. The severity of his rules, however, was not relished by that brotherhood, whom, finding unmanageable, the saint soon deserted for his former course of life; he became the founder of a sect which rapidly spread over Europe; a zealous iconoclast, in destroying the images as well as the temples of Apollo; the author of *Regula Monachorum*, according to the infallible authority of Gregory the Great, surpassed all other works for the brilliancy of its style, and the deepness of its wisdom; a performer of miracles, and he, finally, died with the exalted reputation of having been the Elisha of his period. The costume of his order consisted of a loose black gown, with large wide sleeves, a scapulary, and a capuchin or cowl, on their heads, terminating in a point behind; the gown and cowl were not worn in doors, and the under dress was composed of a tight suit of flannel, with stockings and shoes, or boots, covering their legs; indeed, with the exception of the

femoralia, and the colour of their costume, the blue-coat boys are nearly fac-similes of most of the religious orders. Black was the prevailing colour in the habits of the Benedictines, from which, in the Canon law they are styled Black Friars. The rules of St. Benedict, as observed by the monks of Reading, and indeed by all English monks who acknowledged him as their patron, were as follows.* They were obliged to perform their devotions seven times in twenty-four hours, the whole circle of which devotions referred to the passion and death of Christ. In Lent, they dared not break their fast till just before sunset, and, in addition to this severe discipline during the same season, their period for repose was considerably abridged; but no one was allowed to practise any further or voluntary austerity without a permission from the superior: reading the Scriptures was practised at meals in place of conversation; from which corporeal and spiritual enjoyment those who had been guilty of small offences were excluded; while greater sinners

* Mosheim, in his Ecclesiastical History, observes that the Latin monks about the commencement of the tenth century, had so entirely lost sight of all subordination and discipline, that the greatest part of them knew not even by name the rule of St. Benedict, which they were obliged to observe. A noble Frank, whose name was Odo, a man as learned and pious as the ignorance and superstition of the times would permit endeavoured to remedy this disorder; nor were his attempts totally unsuccessful. This zealous ecclesiastic being created, in 927, Abbot of Clugni in the province of Burgundy, not only obliged the monks to live in rigorous observance of their rules, but also added to their discipline a new set of ceremonies, which, notwithstanding the of sanctity that attended them, were, in reality, insignificant and trifling, and yet, at the same time, severe and burthensome, this new rule of discipline covered its author with glory, and, in a short time was adopted in all the European convents, for the greatest part of the ancient monasteries, which had been founded in France, Germany, Italy, Britain, and Spain, received the rule of the Monks of Clugni, to which also the convents, newly established, were subjected by their founders; and thus it was that the order of Clugni attained that high degree of eminence and authority, opulence and dignity, which it exhibited to the Christian world in the following century.

were debarred from all religious rites during a stated period; and incorrigible ones were expelled the monastery altogether; they lay in the clothes which they wore during the day (their shirts were woollen, and they only had two a year,) all sleeping in the same dormitory, but each Monk on his peculiar pallet, the furniture of which was a mat, a blanket, a rug, and a pillow. They were not allowed to hold any private property of their own, and all their worldly possessions, which were furnished them by the Abbot, consisted of their scanty allotment of clothes, a knife, a needle, a handkerchief, and a steel pen, with tablets to write upon. The order was introduced into England by St. Augustine, (prior of St. Andrews, at Rome; and subsequently Archbishop of Canterbury,) in the year 596, and if we may date its dissolution at the death of Farrington, the 30th, and last Abbot of the community at Reading, which took place in 1539, its existence in this country will be found to have lasted 943 years.

We have but a few more words to add concerning the present appearance of the ruins of this once majestic structure,—to deny that they possess a certain beauty, would be idle; to claim intrinsic beauty for them, would be equally absurd; the former arises from the associations connected with the building, and the claims to notice which it derives from its antiquity; a stranger will rarely turn from it disappointed; while, if he be a lover of the picturesque, though he may find little in its present architectural details offering subjects for his pencil, the lovely scenery around, to which it once lent additional beauty, will well and amply repay him. It is scarcely possible to assert now, that the original building was characterised by unity of style, though like most English ecclesiastical edifices, and unlike those of Scotland, such, from its remains, appears, but with trifling exceptions, to have been the case. Dr. Macculloch explains this difference in the religious architecture of the two countries, by observing, that in England the particular erections of our edifices coin-

eided in period with the introduction of each new style, of which they were the examples, and that as the style became obsolete, the fashion itself ceased: while in Scotland, where the dates of the erections were generally far later than the first and second, and often even posterior to the subsequent style, the architects, from ignorance or inattention, used indiscriminately whatever they had seen. The ruins of Reading Abbey do not exhibit any violent amalgamations of the Norman and the three Gothics; its immense masses of wall denote its original strength; a great portion of the building was taken away and employed in the construction of the churches of St. Mary, and St. Lawrence; a hospital, kitchen, and pastry-room for the poor Knights of Windsor, were built entirely from materials which the ruins afforded; and they were further despoiled by the late General Conway, who, while building the celebrated bridge on the high road between Wargrave and Henley, made use of the ruins as a quarry, from the resources of which he raised his singular and well-known structure. But the cause of its present state of dilapidation is chiefly assigned to the contending parties, in the civil wars, when not only the outer walls were destroyed by the artillery, and other parts were undermined, or blown up, on its vacuation by the King's troops in 1644, but many of its florid ornaments defaced in mere wantonness: the reformers too, in their anxious search for the silver coffin of the founder, had previously lent no slothful aid in the work of demolition: the tradition that Henry was so buried "was probably one of the notions that prompted them, after having demolished the superstructure, to violate the repose of the grave, and to scatter abroad the ashes of the once mighty Monarch."

The remains of the great hall or chapter house can only be viewed from the exterior; the inside being occupied by the erection of the National School. This beautiful room was eighty feet long, and forty feet wide, with three large entrance doors from the cloister, each surmounted by a window; and five large windows decorated the East end, the roof was an arched cieling;

springing from eight pilasters in the side walls, each twenty feet high, the height of the room from the flooring to the centre of the cieling was about forty feet; the walls were six feet thick above the foundation; below which they were 12 feet thick, to the depth of 7 feet. Two councils were held in this room, the first in the reign of King John, summoned by the Pope's legate: the second, in that of Edward 1st, by Archbishop Peckham. The parliament which was assembled at Reading, in the thirty-first year of King Henry the Sixth, is supposed to have been held in the Refectory, of which, of the church, and of some passages, the stranger will yet find a few remains. For an account of the coffin preserved in the school-house we refer our readers to page 10.

Of the diet of the Monks we have no certain account; Mr. Man cites a corrody granted from the Abbot to John Mawne, allowing him from the manor of Leominster, the same fare as the brethren, which from the mention of flesh, fish, ale, loaves, fuel, and a horse, "to be kept with hay only," appears to have been pretty ample; as a further proof that their diet was not a very spare one, we shall beg leave to close our notice of the Abbey, with the following anecdote from Fuller's Church History. "As King Henry the eighth was hunting in Windsor Forest, he either casually lost, or more probably wilfully losing himself, he struck down, about dinner time, to the Abbey of Reading, where disguising himself, (much, for delight, more, for discovery unseen), he was invited to the Abbot's table, and passed for one of the King's guard, a place to which the proportion of his person might properly entitle him. A sirloin of beef was set before him (so knighted, saith tradition, by this Henry), on which the King laid on lustily, not disgracing one of that place for whom he was mistaken. 'Well fare thy heart!' quoth the Abbot, 'and here in a cup of sack I remember the health of his grace, your master. I would give one hundred pounds, on the condition I could feed so lustily on beef, as you do, Alas! my weak and squeeze stomach will hardly digest the wing of a small rabbit or chicken.' The King plea-

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santly pledged him, and heartily thanked him for his good cheer; after which he departed as undiscovered as he came thither. Some weeks after, the abbot was sent for by a pursuivant, brought up to London, clapt in the tower, kept close prisoner, and fed for a short time with bread and water; yet not so empty his body of food, as his mind was filled with fears, creating many suspicions to himself, when and how he had incurred the King's displeasure. At last a sirloin of beef was set before him, on which the abbot fed as the farmer of his grange, and verified the proverb, that *two hungry meals make the third a glutton*. In spring King Henry, out of a private lobby, where he had placed himself the invisible spectator of the Abbot's behaviour, 'My Lord!' quoth the King, 'presently deposit your hundred pounds in gold, or else no going hence all the daies of your life. I have been your physician to cure you of your squeezie stomach, and here, as I deserve, I demand my fee for the same.' The abbot down with his dust, and, glad he had escaped so, returned to Reading, as somewhat lighter in purse, so much more merry in heart, than when he came thence."

THE FORBURY

Was the outer court of the Abbey, from the ruins of which it is now separated, and presents some remains of Aston's occupation of it during the civil wars. The origin of the name has been disputed, but it is obviously derived from *Foris Burgi*; *Faubourg*, or suburb, in confirmation of which, it was always considered as being out of the jurisdiction of the magistrates of the town. Coates says, "the name might have been spelt anciently *Fore-berie*, the word *Berie* signifying any wide open place: in which sense it is found in the corporation diary." Hearne in his glossary, is still farther from the truth; he describes "the signification of Forbery being nothing but: Forbisher's, or Furbisher's Row, or the place where the arms were furbished, and those that did it, dwell." But though it was customary to name streets from the trades-

carried on in them, such as Silver Street, which was formerly Sievvers (or sieve makers') street, this could not apply to the Forbury which was always *extra villam*. Stow says that Edward III., after keeping Christmas at Guildford, had a great justing at Reading, and Coates suggests thereupon, that this was probably the place where tournaments were sometimes held. In the survey, made by order of parliament in 1650, it is spoken of as a court walled round "bounded with the great Plummery north, the Grange east, and the great garden and scite south, and butting upon the town of Reading west, which town doth yearly keep four fairs, and doth now lie common, and through which there are several ways as passages, into and out of King's Mead, into the great barn, stable, and lodging there, and other ways, which said court contains by admeasurement, seven acres and twenty perches, which we value, for the reasons aforesaid, to be worth, *per annum*, but twenty shillings." Since the dissolution of the Abbey, the Forbury has been considered by the inhabitants, as common; for though the crown lets the abbey lands, and this among the rest, to individuals who consider it freehold, the town has, nevertheless, a prescriptive right to hold fairs in it, and to make use of it as a place of amusement and exercise. Several attempts have been made to deprive the inhabitants of the *common* right, and to confine it to merely during the continuance of the fairs, but they have, at such times, displayed a very praiseworthy spirit, that has hitherto deservedly succeeded in resisting such attempts.

The Literary Institution occupies a private house at the entrance of the Forbury; it possesses a reading room, a residence for the librarian, and the usual advantages attending similar societies. The original shares were subscribed for, at £30 each, but a fresh call was afterwards made, and the Institution is now said to be in a flourishing state. There is a rule followed by most of the reading societies in Ireland which we should do well to imitate here; in that country all officers on duty in the town, or temporarily sojourning in it during a march, are considered free and

welcome visitors at the library, a courtesy which has always been gratefully acknowledged, and not infrequently attended with considerable advantage to the town.

THE FRANCISCAN FRIARY.

It will be unnecessary for us to remind our intelligent readers, that "monk" and "friar," are words of very different signification; the former which indeed, is only properly applied to the Benedictines, anciently denoted a person who withdrew himself from society, to live in solitude and abstinence, and who devoted himself entirely to God either by contemplation or prayer. Friars (*Freres*, or *Brothers*) is a term that became common to the monks of all orders, when the *solitaries* congregated together, and, residing in the same house, under the same superiors, received the appellation of *cœnobites*, to distinguish them alike from the hermits, who had at least a fixed domicile, and the vagabond *sarabaites* who strolled about regardless of rules, and unpossessed of homes. In another sense the word *friar*, was applied to monks who were not ordained to the priesthood, those who were clericated being usually dignified with the appellation of *futher*; but in the course of ecclesiastical history we soon discover that the members of the begging orders alone retained the name that distinguished them as a fraternity; one of these brotherhoods settled in Reading about the middle of the thirteenth century, of whose forms and concerning the nature of whose rules, we shall briefly speak, before we more fully notice their residence in this town.

The establishment of Mendicants or begging friars occurred in the early part of that century in which they appeared, for the first time, in England, during the reign of Henry III.; and in purity of manners, extent of fame, number of privileges and multitude of members, they very soon surpassed all other religious societies. They were most useful men, at a period, when the state and circumstances of their church rendered the establishment of such an order absolutely necessary.

The inmates of the richly endowed monasteries, steeped in luxury and laziness, and fraudulently applying to the use of their brutalized appetites the wealth which had been bequeathed by the terrors of the pious, for the benefit of their own souls, had lost sight of all their religious obligations; indolent,—they suffered the grossest heresies to be preached, unrefuted; ignorant,—they rarely possessed learning enough to answer the commonest enquiries upon the most trifling subjects of literature; rebellious to superiors, abandoned to the worst vices, and remorseless to the basest crimes, they felt no anxiety for the religion that had been entrusted to their unworthy stewardship, and no desire beyond the wish of being left undisturbed in all the wicked enjoyments their ill-gotten opulence could purchase. To oppose such sleepy sentinels as those, up rose a race of men, vowed to poverty, indefatigable, and enthusiastic; their virtue such as it was, rendered the licentiousness of the monks more apparent by the contrast, and the more offensive to society as it became more remarked; they preached against the wealth, the vices, and the corruptions of the clergy, maintained that voluntary poverty was the only pure characteristic of a christian, and, by their eloquence, and energy, and practise, gained an almost sovereign influence over the always weak minds, of the always weak (because ignorant) multitude. Innocent III. was the first of the popes who perceived the immense advantage of introducing such an order into the church; “a set of men,” says Mosheim, “who by the austerity of their manners, their contempt of riches, and the external gravity and sanctity of their conduct and maxims, might resemble those doctors who had gained such reputation to the heretical sects, and who might rise so far above the allurements of worldly profit and pleasure, as not to be seduced by the promises or threats of kings and princes, from the performance of the duties which they owed to the church, or from persevering in their subordination to the Roman Pontiffs.”

Under the fostering influence of the vice-gerents of Heaven, the Mendicant orders arose in such num-

bers, and never-ending variety, that their multitude began to be oppressive to the people, burthensome to the church, and matter of serious consideration with the Roman Apostolic Council as to the means of reducing them, by suppressing the least useful, and by consolidating the remains into four great communities. This desirable consummation was effected under Gregory X., by the council of Lyons, in 1272, and the "extravagant number of mendicants," were confined to the members of the four following societies, the Dominicans, Carmelites, Hermits of St. Augustin, and the Franciscans or Grey Friars. All these fraternities, by their talents and sanctity, acquired an extended reputation, and a boundless esteem, and veneration; the instruction of youth (the most difficult and delicate of tasks) was entrusted to them; their churches were crowded by the pious, who would receive the blessed emblems of salvation from no hands but those of a mendicant friar, and the crowded condition of their cemeteries testified the anxiety which had been felt by the dying to have their last resting place in the earth that had been consecrated by the holiest of beggars. Of these, however, our attention must be necessarily confined to the Franciscans alone, whose order (superior to all the rest except, perhaps, that of the Dominicans, which did not surpass it) had a religious house in this town, in the custody or wardenship of Oxford; at the dissolution of the monasteries, the conventual Franciscans had about 55 houses in England, which were under seven custodies; viz. those of London, York, Cambridge, Bristol, Oxford, Newcastle, and Worcester.

Francis of Assisi, a province of Umbria, in Italy, the founder of this celebrated order, was the son of a merchant; and he enjoys the reputation of having been one of the most debauched and dissolute youths, of the still dissolute race that inhabit the sunny side of the Alps. The extravagant licentiousness of his conduct soon affected his health, and worked, as is usual, a sure and weary retribution, by prostrating his strength, and bringing him to the very verge of the grave. The result of his sickness was his transformation from a

due to a fanatic; at least, his enthusiasm has been described as an extravagant kind of devotion that looked less like religion than alienation of mind. In the year 1208, in the course of his attendance on public worship, he was forcibly struck on hearing repeated the address of Christ to his apostles from the 10th chapter of St. Matthew; of which, the 9th and 10th verses appear to have made the deepest impression on his naturally warm imagination. "Provide neither gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purses, nor scrip for your journey, neither two coats, neither shoes, nor yet staves, for the workman is worthy of his meat." A deep reflection upon this passage convinced him that absolute and voluntary poverty was one of the most important articles that could be prescribed to those who were willing to devote their lives to the task of acquiring the favour of God; and the neophyte, accordingly both practised it himself, and taught the same to the little band who suffered themselves to be styled his followers.—In this young society Innocent III.* fancied he saw the foundation of a renewed course of prosperity and holiness to a church, still indeed prosperous, if wealth is to be understood as its sign, but which was sunk to nearly the lowest level of degrading vice and ignorance; the favour manifested towards it by this pontiff, was confirmed and enlarged by Honorius III., (in 1223) whose patronage elevated the order to a very high degree of fame, though it disowned notoriety, and of power, though it shunned wealth, which alone can purchase it. Three years after this the founder of the Franciscans died; but, in witnessing the reputation and magnitude of the society to which he was the father, not without accomplishing the proud object of the latter period of his life; in his excessive humility he forbade his followers assuming the appellation of *fratres*, (brethren or friars;) but he bequeathed to them, a beggar's legacy, his prayers

* The fourth Lateran Council established the doctrine of transubstantiation, during the sway of this pontiff. The Inquisition, and the degradation of a distinguishing costume imposed upon the Jews, are also among the memorabilia of the dominion of this meek *servus-servorum*.

and the name by which they are still distinguished, *fraterculi*, (friars minor, or little brethren) a term often applied to them in reproach or derision, but one which they the more courted for those very reasons, in the spirit of the humility which they professed *Cordeliers*, from the rope of St. Francis which girded their loins; and *Grey Friars*, from the colour of their gowns, are also terms by which they are frequently distinguished. The favour which had been extended towards them by the supreme power in the metropolis of the Christian world, was repaid by the zealous and active gratitude which they unchangingly manifested in the support, and exemplary veneration which they paid to the popedom; and for which they in return, were loaded with honors, privileges, and indulgences; we find them in the enjoyment of the first, as ambassadors from the Father of the Church, and advisers, anxiously listened to and obeyed, in the councils of royalty; their privileges consisted in the permission to preach, hear confessions, and pronounce absolution, without seeking either the license or sanction of the bishops—an employment which rendered them at once wealthy and odious; but the chief source of their riches arose from the sale of indulgences, a lucrative employment, granted them as an indemnification for their sacrifice of fixed revenues; in process of time it naturally followed that the Franciscans, whose principle obligation was absolute poverty became possessed of immense possessions and revenues in common, from which each *fraterculus* drew the means which he deemed requisite for his own subsistence; many of them who had sworn to poverty when they were ignorant of a way to grow rich, thought that since greatness had been forced upon them, they might safely dispense with the distinguishing and now, seemingly oppressive injunction of their founder; they were well aided by Gregory IX, who in spite of Guelphs and Ghibellines, and his wars with Conrade, found time to publish an interpretation of the rule of St. Francis which mitigated it of a considerable share of its excessive rigour. But there were yet conscientious cordeliers who loudly exclaimed against the new order

of things, and under the denomination of Spirituals, declared that there was no happiness upon earth but in gloom and melancholy, and the only orthodoxy—no money. Innocent IV, to whom the *têtes exaltées*, for both sides consisted of equally fierce disputants, referred the subject of their differences, decided in favour of the anti-severists; enacting by a decree that the Franciscan friars should be permitted to possess lands houses, chattels, books, &c. but adding, with somewhat of the spirit of the lawyer in the fable of the two litigators, that the property of all these things should reside in St. Peter; that is to say, in himself, as the Apostle's heir and successor. This edict which was by no means calculated to satisfy the reformers, rendered the Spirituals outrageous, but these mal-contents, an appellation which of course fell to them as being the weaker party, were summarily disposed of by banishment, or more graciously forced into a voluntary retirement.

In 1247, John of Parma, being chosen general of the order, recalled the exiles, and made the old rule of St. Francis the absolute law of the society, but the moneyists accused him as a rebellious heretic at the tribunal of Alexander IV., in consequence of which he was deprived of his post, and his monks thrown into prison, a fate which he himself, escaped with great difficulty. His successor, the learned and mild Bonaventura, endeavoured to reconcile both parties, but his endeavours were not attended with good fortune; a renewal of the decree, allowing the possession of property, was obtained, though, in a transient hour of success, the adherents of John of Parma subsequently abrogated and annulled the explication of Innocent, especially in those points wherein it differed from that which had been formerly given by Gregory IX. Various were the degrees of fortune which attended the dissentients during the reigns of succeeding popes, and the government of succeeding generals. Nicholas III. favoured the austere side, and published a constitution prescribing the original rule and duty of severe poverty; but allowing them the possession of houses, books, and similar conveniences. The Spirituals, however,

and the French Franciscans, with their leader the celebrated Petrus de Serignam, (Pierre Jean d' Olive of Serignam, in Languedoc) received this constitution with discontent; they continued to write and preach in favour of the original rule, and a tumultuous war of opinions ensued till the year 1287, the period of Matthew of Aqua Sparta, who was elected general of the order and who made the "confusion worse confounded."

The new leader neglected altogether the ancient rules and institutions of the society neither requiring his monks to profess poverty nor to practice it; such a latitude of opinion offended the moderate men of his own party, and the whole order split into a greater number of divisions than before; and dissensions and schisms continued for many years in a community that had been celebrated for its pretended disinterestedness and humility; the violent Spirituals maintained that the founder of their order was a second Christ, in all respects similar to the first, and that neither had common or personal property in any thing they possessed; these were opposed by the *brethren of the community*, a term applied to those who were of opinion that the ancient severity of their institutions might be changed, though they loudly exclaimed against any power on earth having a right to alter their costumes. The disorders occasioned by the tumultuous collisions of these two parties could not for some time be quelled; they defied alike the mild interference of Clement V., and the violent mediation of John XXII.;—from the year 1329, the rage of the disputants began gradually to subside, and thirty-nine years subsequently, they divided into the two large bodies which at present exist, the *conventual brethren*, and the *brethren of the observance*; they immediately separated and settled in various countries of Europe, the general opinion is, that they visited England as early as 1224, though there is no authentic account of them till the reign of Henry VII., but as it was probably about the period of the great division that they flocked here in the most considerable numbers, it is at this point our notice of them in general must necessarily cease, in order

to observe the particular foundation which they had in this town.

The establishment of the order of Franciscans, or Grey Friars, is said to have taken place at Reading, A.D. 1233, by permission of Gregory IX. Adam de Lothbury, the abbot of the Benedictine Monastery, granted them a piece of waste ground in the Cover-sham road, thirty-three perches in length; and twenty-three in breadth. On this ground they were allowed to build a place of residence, and continue there under certain restrictions; viz. that they were never to ask alms, acquire property, nor solicit donations, (though they were permitted to receive voluntary gifts that did not exceed their necessities), and they were also bound neither to erect dwellings on any other part of the Monastery possessions, nor to seek to extend the limits of what had been already granted them. The friars, on their part agreed that an infringement of any of these rules should subject them to expulsion without the power of appeal; while, to defend themselves against the possible occurrence of the oppressive caprice of the monks, they introduced a clause in the deed of settlement, wherein it was enacted that, "if the friars should be expelled by the monks of Reading Abbey, for any other cause than those above mentioned, they should be re-instated by the King's authority, and enjoy in their own right, what had been granted them by the Abbey. If the friars should voluntarily relinquish their habitation, the buildings and site of the edifice should belong to the Abbey."

Fifty-two years subsequent to the date of the above grant, a new permission of settlement was made out, on the frequent representation of the brotherhood that their original residence was in an unhealthy situation, from the marshy nature of the ground on which it was erected; and that it was, moreover, exposed to floods, at which period they were obliged to quit the place, or to remain there in great danger; and that in winter, the distance from the town made it very inconvenient for them to procure necessities.

The present ruins in Friar-street point out the site of their new location. Mr. Coates says they received

" a certain area or piece of ground containing 16 perches in breadth, and 16 and a half in length, situated between the house of Stephen the priest, at that time rector of the church of Sulham, towards the east on the one part, and a gravel pit towards the west on the other part, and extending from the street called New street to the end of the area which was already occupied by the friars." The conditions are the same as on the former grant, except the addition of a clause restraining them from interring in their cemetery, church, or any other place, the bodies of the parishioners of the Monastery, or of any of the churches belonging to the Abbey, in the town of Reading or elsewhere, without special license. Their new situation was a little southward of their former one, and its superior advantage consisted in its being on more elevated ground; its extent was increased by the legacy of Robert Fulco, who bequeathed to the brotherhood part of the ground now occupied by Friar street; and Lacy, Earl of Lincoln, under the sanction of Edward I. contributed towards the buildings, fifty-six oaks from Asherigge, (Ashbridge, in Berks), a part of his estate situated within the limits of Windsor Forest. The work, however, appears to have been a considerable time in process of completion. When that period arrived, it is said, but not with certainty, to have been dedicated to St. James; it is supposed not to have had any endowments of lands, and that the friars, of whose number we have no account, subsisted wholly upon alms. Judging from the small extent of ground it occupied, and its appearance in Speed's map of the town, Mr. Man pronounces the building to have been neither roomy nor elegant; its remains, however, might warrant a different conclusion; the western window is a very beautiful specimen of the florid gothic, and an assurance in itself that the rest of the building was of corresponding elegance. Of the nave, side aisles, and chancel, of which the original structure consisted, the latter has long been destroyed, but the former remain, in nearly their original state; a line of six clustered stone columns supporting five lancet-pointed arches, extending on both sides, the whole length of the nave,

divide the aisles from the body of the church; the spaces between the pillars are each fourteen feet four inches, except the two at the east end, which are only eleven feet apart, and equal to the width of the south transept. On the wall, (on each side of the arch which led into the choir), which had been whitewashed over, some remains of painting have been traced, but too much defaced to enable the subject to be understood. An arched doorway, with circular mouldings, formed the entrance from the street; and an opposite door led to the cemetery and convent. The walls were composed of a solid mass of flint and mortar, supported according to Mr. Man, by a "heavy tiled roof, reaching nearly to the ground;" the sub-roof was of lath and plaster, and the whole was remaining in 1786, but was afterwards removed, to render the building more salubrious when converted to its present purpose of a place of confinement.

At the general dissolution of religious houses, this, of course, met with no happier visitation than that which swept away so many other richer, and probably less influential communities. The act of surrender, which we make no apology for quoting entire, shows how very well the poor Franciscans could make a virtue of necessity; the mention however of "jewels, tythes, and commodities," proves them to have been above the abject poverty to which they were bound by their vow; but the act, nevertheless, has in it a vein of pathos that cannot fail to acquire the sympathy of all who can understand the state of desolation to which these men were reduced.

Act of Surrender of the House of Grey Friars, at Reading.

"Forasmuch as we do now consider, as well by daily experience, as by example and doctrine of divers well-learned persons, which have heretofore professed divers sorts of pretended religions, that the very true way to perfection and to please God, is ministered unto us sincerely and sufficiently, by the most wholesome doctrine of Christ, his apostles, and evangelists, and after declared by the holy fathers in the primitive church of Christ, and doth not consist in the traditions and inventions of man's wit, in wearing of a grey, black, white, or any other coloured garment, cloak, frock, or coat, in girding ourselves upon our outward garments, with girdles full of knots,

or in like yeculiar manner of papistical ceremonies, sequestering ourselves from the uniform, laudable, and conformable manner of living of all other christian men, used many years from the beginning of Christ's religion. Perceiving also, that as well the high estates of this realm, as the common people do note in us, and daily doth lay unto our charges, the detestable crime of hypocrisy, dissimulation, and superstition, which draweth their benevolence, and supportation from us, whereby we have been in times past in manner only sustained; We, therefore, the guardian and convent of the house, called commonly Grey Friars of Reading, considering that we may be the true servants of God, as well in a secular habit, as in a friar's coat; and knowing and well considering the miserable state we stand in, being fully determined in ourselves to leave all such papistical and strange fashions of living, with the garments appertaining unto the same, with all our mutual, and free assents and consents, do most humbly in this behalf, submit ourselves and every one of us, our house and place we dwell in, and all our buildings, ornaments, utensils, jewels, tythes, commodities, and all our things, whatsoever they be, pertaining unto the same, and by these presents do surrender the same, and yeild them up into the hands and disposition of our most noble sovereign lord, the King's Majesty, most humbly beseeching the same, freely and without any charge, in consideration of our extreme poverties, to grant unto every one of us, his letters under writing and his grace's seal, to change our said habits, and to take such manner of living, as honest secular priests be preferred unto. And we all shall faithfully pray unto Almighty God, long to preserve his most noble grace. In witness of the premises, and every part of the same, we have subscribed our names unto these presents, and have put our common and conventual seal unto the same, the 13th day of the month of September, and in the 30th year of the reign of our sovereign lord, Henry the VIII."

(Signed) PETER SCHEFFORD, Guardian, and S.T.B.
And Ten others.

After this act, some of the aged brethren applied, through Pollard, one of the commissioners, to be permitted to enjoy during their lives, their chambers and orchard, adding that their advanced years and infirmities precluded them from all chance of obtaining a subsistence elsewhere. The application, however was unsuccessful; the church and dormitory were defaced, and the friars, each bearing a sum of money, and a discharge of his debts, were ejected from their homes, in secular apparel. The old inhabitants were no sooner expelled than the poorer classes of the town despoiled the building of every thing that was moveable;

they even carried off the clappers of the bells; and, when, with the additional assistance of the commissioners, all the sacred appearance of the place was effaced, the body of the house was granted for a town hall, on the representation of Dr. London, that the old building which was appropriated to that purpose was very inconvenient from its situation upon a part of the river which was the common washing place of the town; and that the noise from the battledores (as they are now commonly employed upon the Continent) used in beating the linen, was so great as to interrupt the judicial proceedings carried on within. It was subsequently, at least a part of it, converted into a hospital or workhouse for the reception of children and old persons, and supported by charitable contributions, and the proceeds arising from the labour of the inmates; its next and final change was, in 1613, to a house of correction, for which, as far as regards offences committed in the town, it is still employed, the aisles being converted into cells for the prisoners, and the roof over the nave, as before mentioned, having been taken down, to render it more airy.

THE GREY FRIARS IN CASTLE STREET.

Mr. Man supposes this convent, from its forming a part of the same community as that in Friar Street, to have been probably a chapel to the latter; according to Tanner it was erected in the fourteenth century, and Leland describes it "a late fayre house of grey freres in Castle-Strate." It is said that the extent of ground allotted for the purpose did not exceed a quarter of an acre, on which a residence for the friars and a small chapel were erected; the present chapel in Castle-street stands upon its site. When it devolved to the crown, it fell either by gift or purchase, into the hands of the magistrates of the county, who converted it into a prison for debtors, and such criminals as were amenable to their jurisdiction. In 1798, it was taken down, and several human skeletons were discovered, (while the foundation was being constructed for the present building) which were supposed to have been some of the mortal remains of the old reli-

gious inhabitants; but as executed criminals were interred here during the time the prison stood, it is not impossible but that they may have been the bones of some of the latter. It was after this the custom to bury criminals in the north west corner of St. Mary's Church-yard, "in like manner as they are now buried within the bounds of the present new jail." The vaults which were discovered under the altar, and in the body of the chapel (a small unornamented edifice, thirty feet and a half by twelve and a half) were found, on removing the rubbish, to be quite untenanted.

ST. EDMOND'S CHAPEL

Was founded in 1204, by Lawrence Burgess, bailiff of Reading, by permission of Abbot Halias, on condition of giving an endowment for its support. It was erected at the west end of Friar-street, called Chapel Hill, on a triangular piece of ground, formed by the hill and the road leading to Caversham, of about half an acre in extent. "This chapel was desecrated in the time of Abbot Thorn, as appears by a memorial presented against him in 1479, to King Edward IV. for various instances of misconduct. The memorial states, that this chapel, wherein were laid the bones of many christians, was then become a barn." On becoming the property of the crown, it was annexed to the royal manor, at Battel; in the reign of Charles I. the chapel was converted into a fort, called Harrison's Barn. This, with the hermitage which Burgess built, and in which he died, has long since been demolished.

CELEBRATED PERSONS OF THE RELIGIOUS ORDERS ESTABLISHED AT READING.

William of Reading, a learned Benedictine, employed by King Henry II. in many embassies, and promoted by him to the Archbishopric of Bordeaux, where he died, in the reign of Richard I.

Robert of Reading, a Benedictine, who travelled through Spain, for the purpose of acquiring mathematical knowledge; during his journey he translated the Koran from Arabic into Latin, A.D. 1143.

William Boteler, celebrated as the most eminent Franciscan of his time, in England. He retired to this town, at an advanced age, and died here in 1410. His works are "*Determinatio*," against translating the scriptures into English. A MS. in the library of Merton College, "*Lecturæ super Magistrum Sententiarum*," Lib. IV. "*De indulgentiis pontificum*." "*Questiones variæ*."

John Latterbury, a member of the Franciscan friary at Reading, and doctor in divinity; a degree which he acquired at Oxford, where he studied: he was celebrated for his literary attainments, his excellence in theology, and for his great candour. His works are a "*Commentary upon Jeremiah*," printed in 1482, and much esteemed. "*Distinctiones Theologiæ*." "*Lectiones Scripturarum*." "*Conciones variæ*." "*Lecturæ morales*." "*De Luxuria Clericorum*." "*Loci communes*." And the following, which he bequeathed to the Friary:—" *Explanatio Psalmorum*." "*Alphabetum Morale*." "*Super Acta Apostolorum*." and "*Commentarius in Hieremiam Prophetam*."

ST. MARY'S PARISH AND CHURCH.

"The parish of St. Mary is generally supposed to be included in that part of the borough which was first built upon, and therefore is considered the most ancient of the three parishes of which the town is at present composed."

"It is bounded on the north by the river Thames, which separates it from Caversham, on the west side as far as the bridge, from whence, taking in a small mead, now a whitening manufactory, it passes along the centre of the high road, and the lane, called the Workhouse lane,* to the Pangbourn road,† where turning to the left it passes along the middle of Broad-street and Butcher-row, to the end formerly called Tutte-hill; from thence down Yield hall, now Hill-hall, to a ditch at the bottom, which forms the boundary on the south, and passing under the north end of the Bear Inn to the Back brook, and from thence to the Kennet, above the Lock, which, from this place, becomes the boundary line between this parish and St. Giles's; the remainder, on the west side, is included within the bounds of the borough; but the hamlet of Southcote, belonging to this parish extends beyond the limits of the borough. The making of the river Kennet navigable in 1720, had so confused the line of demarcation between the parishes of St. Mary and St. Giles, that to prevent any further alterations respecting those boundaries, it was found necessary in 1788, for each of the vicars, with the churchwardens, and other respectable inhabitants of the two parishes, to make a survey of the whole line. when it was agreed, "that the slip of land adjoining the Penlock mead, and the mead itself, about four acres more or less, are in the possession of St. Mary's, and also a slip near the Wire mills, and a meadow, and a copse of about four acres, called, in Mr. Blagrave's map, Wallot mead, near the said mills. And it has since been proved, that a meadow, called Dodd's mead, of three acres, near the said mills, belongs to

* Thorn-street.

† Oxford-street.

St. Mary's parish, whose officers have since received the taxes for the same." *

St. Mary's derives its appellation of Minster, from the supposed circumstance of its having been the first religious edifice erected in this place, after the conversion of its inhabitants. The term, which is pure Saxon, anciently signified the church of a monastery or convent; the first stone of which was usually deposited by the saint or preacher through whose persuasions the converts had been induced to crown their work of religious faith by raising a temple in honour of their new and only deity. We find St. Alban, in Lydgate's life of that celebrated saint, thus mentioned :

Seynte Albone

Of that mynstre leyde the first stone.

The old church, being found in a state of great dilapidation, was taken down, in 1547, and the present structure raised in its place, between the years 1550 and 1553; the old spire, however formed a part of the new church, and it remained standing till 1594, when it was blown down in a violent storm of wind. The expence of rebuilding was very small, in consequence of the materials being supplied by the abbey remains and by what could be made useful from the ancient church; the sum amounted to only £124,,3,,5 and to this may be added the subsequent expence of erecting the tower, which was partly paid by a rate levied on the inhabitants, and in part by Mr. John Kenrick who bequeathed the sum of fifty pounds, in 1624, towards completing the pinnacles.

Like the other churches in this town, St. Mary's can boast of no architectural beauty. It is a plain long building, with a square tower of considerable elevation (about 90 feet), and some ornament; composed of compartments of flint and stone, placed checker-wise, and surmounted by four pinnacles, terminating in vanes. The pinnacles are supported by octangular buttresses, through one of which is the ascent by a stone stair case to the bell-tower, and the

* Mr. Man and Parish Register.

leads, which are surrounded with battlements. The nave, in its original state was compass-roofed; which form is now changed to that of an obtusely pointed arch, supported by frame work of a similar shape, the body of the church consists of the nave, a large handsome chancel, a south aisle, and a small north aisle, called Vachell's; a row of pillars, supporting four circular arches, and which are thought to be remains of the old church, separate the south aisle from the nave; the chancel contains various monuments to the memory of some of the principal benefactors of the town; and the part devoted to the congregation is occupied by, what Mr. Man very justly calls, "the usual encumbrance of pews," those defacers of all interior ecclesiastical beauty, and invented for the people, immortalized by Prior, who

— paid the church and parish rate,
And took, but read not, the receipt;
For which they claimed their Sunday's due
Of slumbering in an upper pew.

"At the west end is a gallery with the date 1631, and W. F. R. G., the initials of Walter Fellows, Richard Goddard. In the front, carved in wood, are the arms of Thomas Bunbury, the vicar; on a bend dexter, three chess-rooks; over all, a label of three points; the crest, a leopard's face. Over the capitals of the pillars are grotesque figures, which support the projecting part of the gallery, some of which are playing on an instrument of music, resembling a pipe. This is used for a singing gallery, and behind it, under the bellfrey, is a screen of carved oak, with the date 1624, and the initials E. S. R. S. Edmund Spyre, Richard Stampe."

The font stands at the west end of the south aisle; the vase, which appears to have been placed upon the pedestal of a more ancient font, is octagonal: four sides of it are floridly ornamented, one is quite plain, and the other three have escutcheons of arms. Westward of the font, below the window, are the remains of an ancient grave stone, once adorned with rich canopy work, but now stripped of all its ornaments, brasses, and inscriptions. In the same aisle stood

Colney's Chantry, of which there are now no remains. A chantry was anciently a small chapel, church, or altar, in a cathedral or minster, which was endowed with lands, or other yearly revenue, for the maintenance of one or more priests, daily saying or singing mass for the souls of the donors and such others as they appointed. The word, as applied to an interior building, is thus used by Shakespeare:

Now go with me, and with this holy man,
 Into the chantry by:
 And, underneath that consecrated roof,
 Plight me the full assurance of your faith.

Chantry rents, are rents paid to the crown by the tenants or purchasers of chantry lands.

Colney chapel, or chantry, was instituted A.D. 1372, in the reign of Edward III., probably by one of the Colney family, for the benefit of the souls of the king, William and Johanna Catour, Thomas and John de Colney, and for the souls of all the faithful interred within St. Mary's church; an annual rent charge of twenty-five shillings was applied to the establishment of a chaplain; and the presentation to the chantry, after the decease of William Catour, was vested in the mayor of the town; or in the bishop of Salisbury, if no presentation were made within three months.

Mr. Man gives a list of twelve incumbents, ending with Richard Turner, 1523; who had an annuity of six pounds per annum settled on him for life, when the chantry was dissolved in the reign of Henry VIII.

The pews are of oak, and of considerable antiquity; the upright timbers and cross pieces that support the substantial framework of the roof, are said to be of chesnut, and have been procured from Reading Abbey; the pulpit and reading desk, a gift from the Vachell family, are of mahogany, and supposed to be part of the first wood of that kind brought into Reading. The communion table is enclosed with rails of oak, and the altar piece is of the same material consisting of plain pannels, with an architrave, supported by fluted pilasters of the Ionic order. In the centre is a semi-circular pediment with a return, supported by three pilasters, between which are the two tables of

the law, in black characters, on a gold ground; and on each side, are the Lord's Prayer and the Creed.

Vachell's aisle, which was originally a small chapel, is on the north side of the church; in the window are the arms of the family, bearing this motto, now almost defaced.

“ It is better to suffer than to revenge.”

the origin of which is thus related by Symonds, in his church notes: “ It is reported in Reading, an old story of Vachell, that would not suffer the Abbot of Reading to carry hay through his yard. The abbot, after many messages, sent a monk, whom Vachell, in fury killed, but was forced to fly; and he and his after took the motto of “ better to suffer than to revenge.” Mr. Coates adds that the tradition still continues, and he supposes that the privileges claimed by the abbot, as lord of the manor of Reading, and impropiator of the great tithes in this parish, resembled those now asserted by the corporation, who, in their preambulations, have the right of passing over a foot bridge, near which it is said, the monk was slain.

The chancel was wainscotted and furnished with seats in 1580; and from the following entry it appears to have been done at the expense of the parishioners. “ The parish, this year, at their own proper costs and charges, and from their own good will, and well disposed minds, and because it is requisite and godly for every christian to come most reverently, orderly, and with all humility to that excellent table of the Lord's supper, being unto them that worthily receive the same, a pearl of most precious prize; and seeing heretofore, how disorderly, for want of good government, and lacking of decent room, the said place was disordered, hath caused the chancel to be wainscotted, and seated round about, which cost fourteen pounds, saving, and towards which, Mr. William Powell, vicar, of his own good will, and so to instigate the parishoners in this so godly a deed, gave forty shillings, and there was laid out of the church-stock, thirteen shillings and and four pence; the remainder was raised by a tax on the seats from eight pence to one penny each yearly.”

There appears no doubt but that the Abbey furnished nearly all the materials of which the church is composed, a fact which sufficiently accounts, as we have already observed, for the small expenses incurred, whether for building or repairing. The subjoined entry from the churchwardens books notice some of the charges made in removing the materials from the abbey for the above purpose.

Paid for the roof in the Abbey	£6	18	8
Paid for taking down the roof and taking out the hooks	0	6	4
Paid for taking down the choir, and the carriage home of the same; twenty-one loads	0	10	6
Paid for the carriage of eleven loads of lead into the abbey, to be cast	0	3	10
Paid the plumbers for their pains	0	1	0
Paid for twenty-one loads carriage of timber out of the abbey	0	6	8
Paid to Serjeant Hynde for the pillars	0	10	0
Paid the Carter for a load of stone carriage out of the abbey	0	2	6
Paid for the door that stood in the cloister, and for a stove in the church	0	8	0

The door here mentioned is, in Mr. Man's opinion, that at the west end of the church, which is evidently of an older date than the rest of the building; the jambs and lintels are of massive free stone; there is an escutcheon on each side but the bearings are quite defaced. Over the door, is a window in the Norman style of architecture, with these letters inscribed about the point of the arch,

T R. A D. T R. T R

In 1571, a parish clerk was appointed, in the person of Mr. John Marshall, who appears to have been the first raised to that important dignity since the opening of the church; his recompence for performing that office, and also the graver duties of sexton, and with those of evening bell ringer, amounted to sixteen shillings and eight pence per annum, he was appointed, (according to the church books) for the more orderly discharge of divine service; and in consideration of his emoluments, he was "from time to time to see the church clean kept, the seats swept and clean made the mats beaten, the dogs driven out of the church the windows made clean, and all other things done

that shall be necessary to be done for the good and cleanly keeping of the church, and the quiet of divine service.

A further addition was made to the ornamental part of the church in 1611, by the introduction of a clock, made by a horologist from Windsor ; who was to receive twenty-four pounds, thirteen shillings, and eight pence, on the completion of his piece of handicraft ; and to give a bond to the parish, under sufficient surieties, for its going correctly ; but the Windsor clock maker does not seem to have been the Tompion of his craft, for shortly after, Mr. Marshall had to enumerate among his other duties, the setting of the clock " so as to go and strike, as near as he could, at due hours."

The church had originally a ring of three bells, but in 1614, a fourth bell was added, of the value of fifty-one pounds sixteen shillings ; nearly half was paid by Mr. Powell, the Vicar ; and the remainder made up by subscriptions from the parishioners ; whose liberality, in the same year, contributed towards building the arch that divides the chancel from the nave. In the following year, Dr. Powell, who seems to have been indefatigable in promoting the beauty of his church, and increasing the number of its bells, succeeded in persuading " the right worshipful Lady Bennet Webbe, widow of Sir William Webbe, Knt. citizen, and ironmonger, of London, and lord mayor in 1591, who was born at Reading," to contribute the " fifth bell," which cost one hundred and one pounds, sixteen shillings, and weighs twenty-one hundred-weight, one quarter, nineteen pounds ; this addition to the belfry was called the Lady bell, to commemorate, *in memoriam sempiternam* the generosity of the relict of the flower of civic aristocracy. At what time the present ring of eight bells was completed is not mentioned.*

* The first application of bells to religious purposes is ascribed to Paulinus Bishop of Nola, in Campania, about the year 400 ; they were introduced into Scotland, as early as the sixth century, and during the following one, into the churches of England. The number of bells in every church gave occasion to the curious and singular piece of architecture in the *campanile*, or bell-tower ; an addition which is more susceptible

The south window, opposite the pulpit, was built in 1679, by the churchwardens, "which was the only thing they did that deserves praise," shortly after, the roads, leading to the church, which had become almost impassable, were properly repaired, and from this time it received little in the way of ornament or addition, till the year 1796, when the whole was thoroughly renovated and embellished.

A terrier or rent roll of St. Mary's Parish in 1556.

A quit rent out of a tenement at Tanmyl Lock (Lock Mead, behind the Bear Inn)	. . .	0	0	6
A quit rent out of a barn in Lurkman's Lane	. . .	0	0	1
A quit rent out of a house in Grape Lane	. . .	0	0	3
A quit rent for a house in Minster Street	. . .	0	0	4
A quit rent of Richard Butler, the miller of Burfield for his house in Minster Street	. . .	0	0	6
A year's rent for the house of the hill	. . .	0	1	8
A year's rent for the tenement at Cornish Cross, called the Clerk's house	. . .	0	6	8
A year's rent of the Thatched house	. . .	0	6	0
A year's rent for a house opposite the Bear	. . .	1	8	0
A year's rent for a house in the Butts	. . .	1	4	0
Total	. . .	£3	8	0

Terrier in 1799.

Mr. Vachell's chancel, per annum	. . .	1	0	0
Rent of a house in Castle Street, in the occupation of Mr. Abery, baker	. . .	2	8	0
Rent of Mr. Dixon's house in the Butts	. . .	2	0	0
Rent of Mr. Earle's house in Castle Street	. . .	1	10	0
Rent of Mr. Jno. Dean's house	. . .	3	0	6
Total	. . .	£9	18	6

of the grander beauties of architecture than any other part of the edifice, and is generally, therefore, the principal or rudiments of it. Bells were formerly baptized, anointed *oleo christi-matis*, and named in a very solemn manner, as when this ceremony had been performed, they were supposed to have the power of calming tempests, extinguishing fires, and more particularly of driving away spirits; hence the origin of the *passing-bell*, which was anciently rung to scare away the devil, and give the parting soul what sportsmen call *law*, the better to enable it to win its race for immortal life! The pleasure arising from the melody of bells consists in the variety of interchange, and the various succession and general predominance of the consonances in the sounds produced. The anxiety of the Vicar for increasing the number of his bells is easily accounted for, when we recollect that, *four bells* only admit of *twenty-four* changes in ringing, while *five bells* can make *one hundred and twenty*.

“The revenues of the vicar, consist of the great and small tithes throughout the parish, easter dues, and surplice fees. The glebe consists only of the ground attached to the parsonage house, and a small piece of ground called the Lock Mead, or the Vicar’s orchard, containing fifty-one square or superficial poles, now making part of the garden belonging to the Bear Inn. There is besides, a house on the south side of Castle-street, belonging to the vicarage. The rectorial tithes were granted by queen Elizabeth, in 1573.

“In addition to the above the vicar receives ten pounds per annum, the gift of Mr. Kendrick, for reading morning prayers, out of which sum he pays the clerk thirty shillings. He also receives three pounds eleven shillings, per annum, being the interest of S. S. stock, purchased with the sum of one hundred pounds, left for that purpose by Mrs. Thorn. John Blagrove, Esq. in 1611, left ten shillings, per annum, to the vicar for the time being, for a sermon to be preached on Good Friday; and Mrs. West, in 1717, left one pound per ann., for a sermon to be preached on St. Thomas’s day, every year, at one of the three churches, alternately.”

“Beside the above gift for extra duties, the vicar receives annually, one pound ten shillings, being one third of the tenth part of Mr. Allen’s gift.”

“The church is rated in the King’s books, at eleven pounds, twelve shillings, and three pence half-penny; and the yearly tenths at one pound three shillings and two pence three farthings.”

The vicarage house is situated on the south side of the church-yard. The front was rebuilt by Mr. Fox, it was enlarged by Dr. Bolton, and considerably enlarged by Mr. Sturges. Until the dissolution, the vicarage was in the patronage of the Abbey; since then it has been in the presentation of the King, or what is nearly the same thing, in the gift of the Lord Chancellor. Mr. Coates furnishes a list of twenty vicars who successively held it (from 1173 to 1570) while the patronage was in the possession of the abbey and convent of Reading; the following list contains the names of vicars, since the erection of the present church:—

Mr. Wm. Powell	A.D. 1571	William Reeves,	A.D. 1711
Jno. Denison, D.D.	1614	Francis Fox, M.A.	1726
Thomas Bunbury, D.D.	1628	Robert Bolton, D.C.L.	1738
Christopher Fowler,	1641	Charles Sturges,	1763
Peter Mews, L.L.D.	1662	Archdeacon Nares	1805
William Lloyd, D.D.	1667	H. H. Milman,	1817
Abraham Brookshanks,	1676		

Christopher Fowler, mentioned above, was born at Malborough, and, at the age of 16, became a servitor of Magdalen College, in 1627, where he remained till he took his bachelor's degree, when he removed to Edmund Hall, took there the degree of Master of that faculty, and was shortly after ordained; for some time he preached near Oxford, and subsequently, at West Wood-hay, near Donnington, in this County. In 1641 he joined the Presbyterians, and became celebrated for his conceited and fantastical style of preaching. "For by his many odd gestures and frantic behaviour (unbecoming the serious gravity to be used in the pulpit) he drew constantly to his congregation, a numerous crowd of silly women and young people, who seemed to be hugely taken and enamoured with his obstreperousness and indecent cants." He was appointed successively to the dignities of vicar of St. Mary's, fellow of Éton, and assistant to the Berkshire Commissioners, named for carrying on the "beauteous discipline," as their employment was termed of ejecting those whom they styled "scandalous, ignorant, and insufficient ministers and schoolmasters." At the restoration, being a non-conformist, he lost both his vicarage and fellowship, and retired to Kennington, where he continued to preach in his usual style. For some time before his death, he was much disordered in his understanding, and, finally, died in Southwark, in 1676.

Fowler's works possess very little merit, though he seems to have been a man of education; and there is nothing known of his character, that can warrant our impeaching him for want of sincerity in his motives. It was rather against the *αρελλοι* of the puritans, than against the talented members of that class of religionists, that the shafts of the dramatists of that period

were driven ; of the many allusions made to them by theatrical writers, Jonson's deserves to be the best known for it is at once the most witty and correct :
ex. gra.

Lit. Rabbi Busy, sir, is more than an elder, he is a prophet, sir.

Quar. O, I know him, a baker, is he not ?

Lit. He was a baker, sir, but he does dream now, and see visions ; he has given over his trade.

Quar. I remember that too ; out of a scruple he took, that in spiced conscience, those cakes he made, were served to bridales, may-poles, morrices, and such profane feasts and meetings. His christian name is Zeal-of-the-Land.

Lit. Yes, sir ; Zeal-of-the-Land Busy.

Winn. How ! what a name's there ?

Lit. O they have all such names, sir ; he was witness for Win. here,—they will not be called godfathers,—and named her Win-the-fight : you thought her name had been Winnfred, did you not.

Winn. I did indeed.

Lit. He would have thought himself a stark reprobate, if it had.

Peter Mews, the fifth in the above list of vicars, was probably a more celebrated man even than Fowler : he was a native of Dorset, and born in the year 1618. After receiving his education under his uncle, Dean Winnif, at Merchant Taylor's School, he entered at St. John's College, Oxford, in 1637. His industry there was rewarded in 1641, with the degree of A.B., and four years after, he obtained that of M.A. ; during the civil war, he was an officer, in the royal army, and employed in the King's service in Holland, in 1648. He returned, however, to his College, and in 1660, we find him invested with the honourable degree of L.L.D. In 1684, at which period he was Bishop of Winchester, he was commanded by the King, in compliance with the request of the gentry of Somerset, to go against Monmouth, and he did eminent service, at the battle of Sedgemoor, where he directed the artillery ; and, afterwards, received a rich medal in return for the service he had performed. Hutchins mentions him as a prelate remarkable for his hospitality, generosity, justice, and frequent preaching. He died, November 9, 1706, aged 89, and was buried in Win-

chester Cathedral. The picture of Archbishop Laud, which now decorates the council chamber, was presented to the corporation by this prelate.

Dr. Lloyd, the successor of the above, who was born at Tilehurst, near Reading, in 1627, is chiefly celebrated for being one of the six bishops, who, with Archbishop Sancroft, were committed to the Tower in 1688, for subscribing and presenting to King James the famous petition against reading in all churches, the royal declaration for liberty of conscience; at that time he possessed the see of Asaph. In 1702, when bishop of Worcester, and lord almoner, the queen deprived him of the latter dignity, on the recommendation of a majority of the House of Commons, for having improperly interfered in a Worcester Election. He died at the age of 91; and Coates cites Swift to prove that previous to his death, he had fallen into some imbecility of mind, for he went to Queen Anne, says the Dean of St. Patrick's, "to prove to her majesty out of *Daniel* and the *Revelations*, that four years hence there would be a war of religion, that the king of France would be a protestant, and that the Popedom should be destroyed."

Remarkable Entries in the Churchwardens' Book.

1555	Paid the man for watching the sepulchre*	0	0	8
	Paid the minstrels	1	6	8
	Paid for a cap and two feathers	0	1	6
1557	Paid to the minstrels and the hobby-horse upon May-day	0	3	0
	Paid to the morrice dancers and the minstrels, meat and drink at Whitsuntide	0	3	4
	Paid to the painter for painting their coats	0	2	8
	Paid upon Holy Thursday for the Lord's breakfast	0	2	1
1558	Paid for hallowing the altars	0	14	0
	Paid for a pound and a half of frankincense	0	0	11
1566	Item for making the butts	0	8	0
	Item for writing the scripture about the church	0	8	4
1570	Paid for two packs of cards	0	0	4
1571	It is agreed that Mr. Powell, vicar, shall have half the Pascal money, he paying for half the bread and wine, according to the agreement made with the old vicar.			

* This was a ceremony used in churches in remembrance of the soldiers watching the sepulchre of our Saviour.

1604*	Item to the ringers, when the queen came through the town	0	18	0
1612*	Item to the ringers, when the king came through the town	0	7	0
1622	Paid the two labourers to plain the ground where the Butts should be	0	5	6
1626	Paid for carving Mr. Jno. Kenrick's arms, over the south arch of the tower	0	2	6
1643†	For ringing for the king, at his return from Branford after the fight	0	1	6
1654‡	Paid for ringing for the Lord-protector	0	6	8
1670	It was ordered that Lovejoy's boy shall be carried to London, to be touched for the king's evil, at the charge of the parish.			
1674	It was ordered, that any person receiving strangers into their houses, and not giving security to the parishioners within forty days, their taxes should be doubled.			
1687§	Paid for ringing when the king came	0	15	0
1688	Paid for ringing when the ¶ Prince of Wales was born	0	6	0
	Paid for ringing when the Prince of Orange was proclaimed	0	10	0
1691||	Paid for ringing three days at the king's return from Ireland	1	19	0
	Memmorandum: that upon the 22nd day of November, Tamfield Vatchell, Esq., and Anthony Blaggrave, Esq. were elected burgesses for this borough, and both of them inhabitants of this parish.			

Some of the entries in the above list furnish us with a very lively idea of the manners and customs of the inhabitants of this part of the country, as they were exhibited in the sports and pastimes of, what we may now consider, a remote period; of these it may not be uninteresting to our readers to offer them a brief explanatory notice; and deferring for the present to touch upon such of the details as refer to religious ceremonies, (as we shall have occasion to mention them in our account of the church of St. Lawrence,) we will shortly illustrate those which are connected

* Queen Anne and her husband James I. or the two queens as the Paris wits would call them.

Rex fuit Elizabeth, nunc est Regina Jacobus.

† Charles I.

‡ Cromwell.

§ James II.

¶ James Francis Edward; the "old Pretender," who died at Rome, A.D. 1766.

|| William III.

with what once formed part of our national amusements.

The Minstrels, were the wandering players of their age; their profession, like the actors', was shared by men of all grades, but it of course proved profitable to none who were not possessed of some ability; there is a nominal and understood aristocracy among the children of Thespis, which also existed, but in a more marked degree, among the sons of "the merrie craft," the latter being divided into squire and yeomen minstrels; at the period they are mentioned in our extract above, they held, in public estimation, a middle place between the awe and reverence which had been paid formerly to the Bards and Scalds, and the neglect and persecution which befel them after the dispersion of the monks, and the rise of dramatic poetry. At the time we find them visiting Reading, they enjoyed the privilege of entering all companies without ceremony, to recite their verses and moral speeches, written for them by the monks, and accompanied by their harps, and they sustained a character at that period far superior to any thing we can conceive at present of the singers of old ballads. In the early and golden era of their art they were both poets and minstrels; all our short heroic ballads can be traced to them; these were never written, for they were composed before literature prevailed, but improved and got by heart. It is thought, from the great variations which occur in different copies of these old pieces, that the minstrels were not scrupulous in altering each other's productions, leaving out, it would seem, or adding whole stanzas as their fancy or taste suggested. When written poetry became cultivated and excited admiration, the minstrels abandoned their own rude rhymes for the scarcely more polished verses composed in the leisure and retirement of monasteries. It was probably when the monks furnished them with their long metrical romances, that they added action to their recitation; such at least is inferred from the fact that our old monkish historians do not employ the words *citharodus*, *cantator*, or the like, to express minstrel in Latin;

but either *minus*, *histrion*, *jaculator*, or some other term which implies *gesture*; and that, in short, according to Dr. Brown's hypothesis, they united the power of melody, poem, and dance; hence, perhaps, why we find them united, as above, with the morrice-dancers, their single attraction was possibly not very great; and from the "painting their coats," it is clear they were yeoman (or inferior) minstrels who assumed some whimsical and fictitious coats, or device. The costume of a squire minstrel was splendid and costly, and such as were retained by noble families, wore their arms hanging down by a silver chain, as a kind of badge. Towards the end of the 16th century this class, which had enrolled kings among its numbers, had so fallen from its former proud elevation, that in the 39th year of Elizabeth, a statute was passed by which "minstrels," wandering abroad, were included among "rogues, vagabonds, and sturdy beggars," and were adjudged to be punished as such. This act seems to have destroyed their profession, for after this time it is no longer mentioned.

The *Morrice-danser*, (*quasi* Moorish dancers) were introduced as an addition to our old May-day sports, at an early period; Mr. Peck, in his memoirs of Milton, with great probability, conjectures that they were first brought into England in the time of Edward III., when John of Gaunt returned from Spain, where he had been to assist Peter, King of Castile, against Henry the Bastard. The original May-day pastime consisted in little more than a party sallying out at the first dawn to gather the fragrant flowers of the white thorn, which were brought home, and being suspended from a high pole, formed a centre for villagers and townsmen to dance round in the evening. The church of St. Andrew Under-Shaft, in London, derives its name from its steeple or tower being lower than the May-pole which used formerly to be erected near it: but the Morrice-dancers, though introduced as an adjunct to the May revels, performed also at Whitsuntide and Christmas, and probably with more éclat and profit where, as in this town, there existed a Franciscan friary, than in any other place, for

while monks and parish priests were prohibited wearing splendid girdles with golden twists and tassels, and forbidden, by their diocesans, to assist in May games, the Franciscans accompanied the Maying party to collect their boughs and flowers, and were not restrained from attending the sports that ensued, being exempt, as we have previously mentioned, from all episcopal jurisdiction.

In foreign countries, the dance was performed by an equal number of young men, who, with naked swords in their hands, danced in their shirts, profusely decorated with ribbands, and having their legs hung with a number of small bells.* In place of the swords, our more peaceful rustics, made use of sticks and handkerchiefs, flourishing the latter, and going through a sort of mock combat with the staves; we also retained the fool; and Maid Marian, an old favourite character, was still Queen of the May, in spite of the attraction of the foreigners; but the most important personage of all was the famous hobby-horse, mentioned in the above list, with the minstrels, as having received three shillings for the joint exercise of their talents, upon the day of the great spring festival. The hobby was a spirited horse of hollow pasteboard, in which the master stood, having his legs concealed by an elegant crimson cloth attached all round close to the body of the animal, while a pair of false legs, booted and spurred, hung from the saddle outside, as

* These bells were generally divided into sets, and attached to pieces of leather made to fasten on various parts of the body; they were small and circular, and many performers carried not less than two hundred and fifty-two of them, formed into twenty-one sets, of twelve bells each; each set possessed perfect harmonious intonation, and regular musical intervals between their tones; so that the morrice-dancer, though he could not produce a tune, was able to create a pleasing and musical chime, according as he regulated with skill the movements of his body. Mr. Morrison, the historian of Perth, in his account of the showy costume of a morrice-dancer, preserved by the Glover Incorporation of that pleasant city, says that the musical arrangement of the bells "is sufficient evidence that the morrice-dance was not quite so absurd and unmeaning as might at first be supposed; but that a tasteful performer could give pleasure by it to the skilful, as well as amusement to the vulgar."

members to represent the real legs of the owner, which were employed beneath the cloth in giving an appearance of vivacity to the steed, by curvetting and caracoling, to the profound amazement of the spectators. There are sufficient materials for the history of the hobby-horse, to be found in the allusions to it, which are scattered throughout our dramatic poetry ; he was long an applauded feature of the people's favourite pageant, till like greater characters he fell beneath persecution ; the turbulent and aspiring race of puritans, who began their career by anathematizing puppets and followed it up by slaying kings, opened against it all the batteries of their religious zeal ; it was, in their sight, " a fierce and rank idol," and the vendors of them, " Nebuchednezzars, proud Nebuchednezzars of the fair, who sat them up for children to fall down to and worship." The modest hobby retired from these attacks in confusion ; he speedily disappeared from among his companions on May-day and other mirth-exciting periods, and is never after mentioned, but as one of the things that have been : we find it thus alluded to, in the well known line from Hamlet,

" For oh, for oh, the hobby-horse is forgot!"*

ST. MARY'S BUTTS.

The spacious street distinguished by this name was formerly a shooting ground of the inhabitants of Reading,—the place where were pitched " St. Mary's Butts," or the targets of the parish of St. Mary ; the name is the only vestige we possess, *here*, for an amusement once practised by all classes, patronized by government, and promoted by laws. In the fifth year of Edward IV. an act passed that every Englishman, and Irishman dwelling with Englishmen, should have an English bow of his own height, which is directed to be made of yew, wych, hazel, ash, or

* " But see the *hobby-horse* is forgot,
Fool, it must be your lot,
To supply his want of faces
And some other buffoon graces."

Jonson's *Queen and Prince at Althorp*.

Passages with the same allusion might be cited *ad infinitum*.

auburne, or any other reasonable tree according to their power. The next chapter also directs, that Butts shall be erected in every township, which the inhabitants are obliged to shoot up and down every feast day, under the penalty of a half-penny when they shall omit this exercise. This law continued in force many years, and was probably the cause of this part of the parish being allotted for the exercise of archery; and the name, in various parts of England, is as often given to the place where the archers met, as to the marks or targets at which they shot. It appears from an old document, that there was formerly a house near, if not on, this spot, known by the sign of *Le Boute*, from which we may reasonably conclude that it was some place of refreshment, opened more especially for the resort and accommodation of the weary marksman, for whom a mug of ale had, for the moment, more attractive charms than a sheaf of arrows.

The use of the bow was impressed upon the English, by the victory gained over them at Hastings by William the conqueror, and the lesson, taught them there, was never forgotten by succeeding generations till the introduction of fire-arms superseded the weapons of the archer. For a long period, the English bowmen constituted the chief strength of the kingdom, and Cressy, Poitiers, Agincourt, and Hamildon, are proud testimonies of the brave efficiency of our ancestors; in the last named field the triumph was undividedly theirs; lance, battle-axe, and sword lay unemployed, and their wearers stood idle spectators of the fight while the archers poured in their death dealing showers of iron, and won the fray. The art fell into some disuse after Richard I. was slain by a peculiar sort of cross-bow, of which it is said, he was the inventor, but it was too important for our national defence to remain long so: for two centuries after gunpowder was introduced, it continued to be in estimation, which probably arose from muskets being cumbersome and unwieldy; it was long encouraged as an amusement after that, and was a fashionable pastime from the reign of Henry VIII. to that of Charles I. The latter monarch made a partial attempt to introduce it again

into the army, but without success. So lately as the year 1753, targets were erected in the Finsbury fields, London, during the Easter and Whitsun holidays ; when the most successful shooter was styled Captain ; and the second best, Lieutenant. The expence of erecting the Butts in St. Mary's Parish, as appears from the Churchwardens' book, amounted to eight shillings, this was in the year 1566 ; they were probably renewed in 1622, when we find that five shillings and sixpence were paid to two labourers for plaining the ground ; in the previous year, the parishioners of St. Giles agreed that the churchwarden and constables should set up a pair of shooting butts, in such place as they should think most convenient :—the cost of this undertaking was fourteen shillings and eleven pence.

The principal societies now in Britain for the encouragement of this ancient sport, are the *Woodmen of Arden*, the *Toxophilite* ; and the *Royal Company*, of Scotland : the feathers selected to wing the arrows are generally taken from the goose ; two out of three are usually white, being plucked from the gander ; the third is brown or grey, and serves, from its difference of colour, to inform the archer when the arrow is properly placed. The English bowman always drew his arrow to his ear and not to the breast ; from antique reliefs, and the tradition of the Amazons, it is very clear that this practise was contrary to that of the ancients ; some authors maintain that in this deviation from the custom of other nations, lay the secret of our superiority, but though the English manner no doubt contributed something towards the superiority which our archers attained, it probably as much consisted in the better materials of the weapons and the more frequent practice of the men.

THE CHURCH OF ST. LAWRENCE.

The parish of St. Lawrence occupies the north-eastern extremity of the borough, and though it is the least extensive of the three parishes into which the town is divided, it is nearly equal to the others in the amount of its population, as it includes within its boundary the wharfs, markets, and most of the principal shops for the sale of goods of every description : it has the Thames on the N. E. the river Kennet on the south, which separates it from the parish of St. Giles, and is bounded on the west, by the Caversham Road, and the boundary line of St. Mary's Parish. The church, which stands on the north side of the Market-place, at the entrance into the Forbury, was erected on the site of the old church, dedicated to St. Lawrence, about the year 1434, during the reign of Henry VI, and under the pontificate of Eugenius IV. There is a tradition in the town, that it was built by an apprentice of the person who constructed St. Mary's, and who was so struck by some fancied superiority in the appearance of the building planned by his pupil, that in a fit of indigestible envy he threw himself from the tower of the Minster, and was killed upon the spot. The great western door-way, composed of a circular arch, ornamented with rich mouldings, formerly belonged to the Abbey; it has an escutcheon of arms, lately restored, on each side, and is surmounted by a very handsome window, of gothic architecture. This window consists of five large lights divided by four mullions, reaching to the base of the arch, the latter is occupied by six small lights, seven mullions, and some very fine tracery work. The niches, near the door, were formerly occupied by statues, in one of them stood the image of St. Lawrence ; the effigy of the patron saint was to be seen, also, in the interior, together with those of St. Clement, St. Thomas, Our Lady of Reading, St. Leonard, St. Vincent, St. John, St. George, St. Nicholas, and the twelve Apostles, with Judas Iscariot; these figures were placed at the different altars, for purposes of religious worship; the high altar stood on the east, adorned with the crucifix, and the images of St. Mary and St. John,

of silver gilt, weighing six pounds seven ounces. The altar of St. Thomas was on the north side; that of our Lady of the Nativity on the south side; St. John's was in the chancel called by his name; and Jesus' altar was the centre one, in the body of the church. These altars were stripped of all their images, plate, and ornaments, by the commissioners of Edward VI., who were appointed to visit all churches for that purpose; the valuables thus collected were ordered to be deposited with the treasurer of the king's household, and the proceeds arising from the sale of such things as were not deemed worth that functionary's care, were directed to be distributed among the poor, who, as is usual in such cases, "had, however, the least share of it;" nothing was left by the commissioners in these forays upon the churches, but one or two chalices of silver, with linen for the communion table and surplices. The quantity of plate, and other things, belonging to this church, given in the following inventory, was made a few years prior to the reformation; we have taken the liberty, in copying so interesting a document, to modernize most of the spelling:

- Imprimis a cross of silver and gilt, with Mary and John, weighing 79½oz., the gift of Master Nichs. More, late vicar.
- Item a censor of silver gilt without a pan, weighing 30½oz.
- Item another censor of silver gilt, with an iron pan in him, weighing 30½oz.
- Item a ship of silver, weighing 9oz.
- Item another ship of silver, weighing 5oz.; the gift of Master Cletche.
- Item two candlesticks of silver, weighing 12oz.; the gift of Richard Cleche.
- Item two books, "a gosspello and a pistello," the one side covered with silver gilt, with images upon the same, and the other side with bosses of silver, weighing in all, 134oz.; the gift of Mr. Richard Smyth, yeoman of the robes with our sovereign lord the king.
- Item two basons of silver, weighing 48½oz.; the gift of Mr. R. Smyth.
- Item a pipe of silver and gilt, with a silver pin, weighing 16½oz, hanging in the church.
- Item "a monstre" of silver and gilt, weighing 24½oz.; for the sacrement.
- Item a charismatory of silver gilt, weighing 22½oz.

- Item a pipe of silver gilt, weighing 6oz.
- Item two small urns of silver, weighing 6½oz.
- Item a bell of silver, weighing 8oz.
- Item a chalice of silver and gilt with a crucifix on the foot enamelled, and the Trinity enamelled on the patent, weighing 25 oz.
- Item another chalice of silver and gilt, with a crucifix graven on the foot, and a hand on the patent, weighing 18oz.
- Item another chalice of silver and gilt with a crucifix enamelled on the foot, and a hand on the patent, weighing 15½oz.
- Item another chalice of silver and gilt with a crucifix enamelled on the foot, and the Trinity enamelled on the patent, weighing 17½oz.
- Item another chalice of silver gilt with a crucifix on the foot, and a vernacle* on the patent, weighing 14½oz.
- Item another chalice of silver gilt with a crucifix on the foot, and a vernacle gilt on the patent, weighing 14oz.
- Item another chalice of silver gilt, weighing 18½oz.; the gift of Wm. Stamford.
- Item a cross of silver and gilt with part of the holy cross therein, weighing 6½oz.
- Item a gridiron of silver and gilt, with a bone of St. Lawrence thereon,† weighing ¾oz.; the gift of Thomas Lyade, Esq.
- Item a round box of copper and gilt, with divers relics therein.
- Item a table closed with relics.
- Item four "knoppis" of copper and gilt.

The Vestments.

- Imprimis a cape of cloth of gold of crimson velvet and blue velvet; the gift of Mr. Thomas Justice, vicar.
- Item a cope of blue velvet with flounces embroidered; the gift of Thomas Clark, hosier.
- Item a cope of crimson velvet with "orphrayes" (gold frieze) embroidered, and angels flounces; the gift of Mr. T. Justice, vicar.
- Item a cope of white damask tissue, with roses of gold, the gift of Ralph White, of Okyngham.
- Item a cope of black worsted with branches and birds of red.
- Item a cope of red silk with signs of the sun; the gift of Daniel Robe, of Reading, monk.
- Item a suit of blue velvet with flounces embroidered, the gift of Thomas Clarke, hoiser.

* From St. Veronica, whose handkerchief it is pretended, received the impression of our Saviour's face, from his having used it in his way to the crucifixion: in France, "*La Sainte Veronique*," is considered the patron saint of that equivocal part of the population, demominated *marchandes des modes*.

† It will be recollected that this saint won his crown of martyrdom, by being roasted to death on a gridiron.

- Item "a chesible" with a vest, and all th' apparel of blue silk, the orfray red velvet with images and crowns of gold.
- Item a chesible of cloth of bawdekyn, (a tissue of cloth of gold embroidered with silk) the orfray of cloth of bawdekyn with th' apparel; the gift of John Derby, alderman of London.
- Item a chesible of green damask, the orfray of red silk, with an image of Saint Lawrence; the gift of Margaret Parker, of Faringdon.
- Item a chesible of white damask with branches of gold, the orfray of blue velvet; the gift of John Thorn, abbot of Reading.
- Item two altar clothes of velvet, blue and black; the gift of Master Smyth.
- Item a cushion, the one side cloth of gold; the other side cream coloured satin, the gift of Mr. Smith.
- Item two pillows, the one side of them, cloth of gold and silver, and the other side green satin.
- Item three pillows of russett ray for weddings.
- Item a corpus case, with the salutation of our Lady.
- Item another cloth of bawdekyn, with two lions.
- Item a canopy of crimson velvet, embroidered with gold flounces, and the holy tomb in the middle.
- Item a pall of blue velvet embroidered with flounces of gold, the gift of Thomas Clarke, hoiser.
- Item a pall of white silk lined with linen cloth, for weddings.
- Item a cloth to lay in the wedding chair.
- Item a banner of red sarsnet for the cross, with images of the Trinity, and of our Lady.
- Item five banners of silk, with the arms of England.
- Item three streamers, one of silk, and two of linen.
- Item two "dext clothes," a knob of gold with tassells of blue silk, twenty altar clothes of linen, seven towels of diaper, and a cot for Mary Magdalen, of cloth of gold.

The altars thus despoiled by the reformers, were once more raised and redecorated during the reign of Mary, who, with her husband Philip, honoured Reading with their presence at the solemnity of restoring the appendages of Roman Catholic worship to their ancient and orthodox purposes; on this occasion their majesties gave a part of the Forbury to enlarge the church-yard, which since the dissolution, was found too small for the size of the parish; before this period, many of the parishioners were interred in the abbey cemetery; the new ground was walled round, at the expence of the inhabitants, and the church-yard, with the altars above-mentioned, was consecrated on Sunday the second of May, 1558, by William Fynche,

suffragan to the bishop of Bath and Wells. The altars, however, were again removed, on the accession of Elizabeth, and an order of council was received, to take down the two organs, (the large one which was used to accompany the choir service, and the smaller one in St. John's Chapel); after some hesitation in complying with the order, it was agreed, in 1578, that to prevent the instruments from being forfeited into the hands of the organ takers, they should be taken down and sold, and the timber of them be applied "to set up two seats higher, for Mr. Mayor and his brethren, above the seat that they now sit in."

The present organ,* according to Mr. Coates, was erected by subscription in 1741. The builder was Mr. John Byfield, a manufacturer of some celebrity, who was considered, in this instance, to have produced a very superior instrument. There are three rows of keys, for the swell, the choir, and the full organ. The stops, exclusive of the diapasons, are tierce, twelfth, fifteenth, principal, sesquialtra, cornet, trumpet, clarion, cremona, and flute. It contains eleven hundred and seventy-nine speaking pipes, and cost four hundred pounds. At the musical festival in 1786, the Messiah was performed here; and Judas Maccabeus in 1787 and 1789.

Over the south door is a Saxon arch supported by pillars, with small Saxon capitals, and within, upon the door, is the date 1620. On the same side of the church, there is a covered portico, open to the market place, called the church walk: it was built at the expense of Mr. John Blagrove, who according to the

* The antiquity of organs cannot be disputed though we possess but little information concerning their invention. Bellarmine says that they began to be used in church services as early as the year 660; while Bingham positively asserts that there were no such things as organs employed in the ancient church; and that though church music was as old as the apostles, instrumental music was not so; he adds that it was the received opinion of his day, that they were not introduced into churches till after the time of Thomas Aquinas, A.D. 1250. Gervas, the monk of Canterbury, on the other hand, who flourished A.D. 1200, affirms that organs were introduced upwards of a hundred years, even, before that time:—*non nostrum, &c.*

inscription on the stone, over the centre pier, bequeathed a hundred pounds to the corporation, for that purpose. The tower is a handsome structure of flint work, 89 feet high, built square, with buttresses at the angles, and an embattled summit with vane and pinnacles ; it was originally furnished with five bells, but it now possesses a very complete ring of twelve ; the largest, weighing 34 cwt. 1 qr. 10 lbs., was presented to the parish by Mr. Harry Kelsal ; it is called the great Harry, and was cast and consecrated in 1499, at which latter ceremony Sir William Symys, Richard Cleche, and Dame Symys, undertook the responsible offices of "god-faders and god-moder." This bell was recast, by subscription, in 1596, when the weight was increased to 36 cwt. 2 qr. 21 lb ; the subscription amounted to £12 9s. 7d. to which "the bachelors of Reading," as a body, contributed the least sum ; only sixteen shillings and ninepence could be extracted from the purses of the unmarried lieges of this town, a fact which bespeaks in them a manifest indifference towards what, otherwise, might be considered their own peculiar duty of ringing the bells.

The church appears to have possessed a clock, very early after its erection, probably about 1499 ; a new clock was set up in 1667, and the chimes and quarters added in 1674. Few churches could have received this useful addition before that of St. Lawrence, as the art of making clocks, such as are now in use, was either first invented, or at least, retrieved, in Germany, about two hundred years ago. The first pendulum clock made in England was in the year 1662 ; there is no doubt that the principle of clock work is very ancient, but it was not applied to the regulation of time, till a comparatively modern period ; we had nothing in use for that purpose, prior to the seventeenth century, but sun-dials, nocturnal dials, invented by an arch-deacon of Verona, and some rude time-pieces made to go as nearly as possible with the sun, by means of water.

The cieling is coved, and the roof supported by large beams and upright pieces ; from Blagrave's monument to the chancel the cieling is elliptical, of

panel work, with roses and other ornaments at each intersection, this part of the church was not completed till 1637, when Sir Francis Knollys contributed ten pounds towards the expense, and built the small aisle on the south side, at the same time, for a seat and burial place, for himself and family. Most of the pews are of oak; there was formerly one in the chancel, appropriated to the use of Queen Elizabeth, who was a frequent visitor here; when her majesty was present, the seat was hung with tapestry, and the aisles strewed with rushes and flowers. The door on the north side of the church was built at the expense of this queen, on the solicitation of Mr. Smyth, the vicar; who also obtained from her an order for repairing the chancel, at the expense of the crown. The pulpit, which was erected in 1735, is said to be after the model of that of St. Giles in the Fields; it is of oak, (as is the reading desk) of hexagonal form, with a rich foliage of carved work running round the bottom and the compartments on each side: the latter being ornamented with inlaid work, consisting of the cross; the sacramental cup; the letters J. H. S., with a cross radiate; an open book, inscribed *Biblia Sacra*; and an inlaid square, within a border of scroll work; the sounding board is supported by two fluted pilasters of the composite order, and is ornamented by a piece of inlaid work representing the Dove, from which flow rays terminated by stars in clusters. The altar piece is also of oak; the two centre pannels of the frontispiece contain the two tables of the law; and the side pannels the Lord's prayer, and the creed; the tetragrammaton, or word Jehovah in Hebrew characters, is inscribed on a circular pediment, with a text from scripture and doxology. Above the altar piece are three ox-eye arches, supported by small pillars with Saxon capitals; they were formerly ornamented with paintings on religious subjects; some figures in fresco and the transfiguration were visible before the repairs carried on in this part of the church, were effected. St. John's Chancel is on the north side of the Vicar's Chancel, and is so named from the brethren and sisters of the old hospital of St. John having formerly their

seats here, of which two old ones are still remaining. The principal chancel, according to Mr. Coates, "is now repaired by the Vicar, and the pews are let for his sole use and benefit;" Mr. Man says, "at present the chancel is repaired by the parishioners." Three round-headed pillars of the original chancel are still standing on the north side, supporting circular arches their capitals are of rich foliage. The font and the pillars in the nave, are said to be of chalk, or of some composition resembling it. The gallery occupying the west, and part of the north and south sides, was built by subscription, in 1720, and the seats appropriated to the subscribers, due regard being paid to those who contributed most liberally towards the erection. In 1740, Mr. Bondry, the vicar, obtained permission to take down a small old gallery at the north-east end of the church, and part of the gallery at the west end, and to build a gallery at his own expense, on the north side of the church, and on the west part of the north chancel; with the power of letting the seats, and of receiving the rents and profits to his own use, and that of his successors for ever. The gallery at the east end was erected in 1768, by Dr. Nicholson, then vicar, at the cost of £123; of which, sixty pounds were advanced by the doctor, and sixty-three pounds by St. John's College: the rents arising from the pews in this gallery, belong to the vicar.

Terrier of St. Laurence's in 1498.

	£	s.	d.
Half acre of mead lying in Langley, in the parish of Tylehurst, let to Jno. Wylder of the Thele, per annum	0	1	1
A tenement on the east side of the Market-place	0	10	0
A tenement in Gutter-lane	0	7	0
A tenement on the south side of New-st. (Friar-st.)	0	10	0
A ground lying in Gutter-lane	0	4	0
A tenement on the south side of New-street	0	4	0
Two gardens lying on the south side of Larkman's lane,* let to Henry Sutton, per annum	0	1	6
A quit rent of a tenement set (let) in High-street	0	1	1
A tenement beside the market, per annum	0	1	0
	<hr/>		
	£1	10	8

* Now Hosiers' Lane.

The Terrier in 1783.

Three messuages in the tenure of the overseers for the accomodation of the poor, with a garden, on the north side of Friar Street, per annum . . .	1	8	6
One garden in Hosier's-lane, and one messuage with a garden, on the south side of Friar-street, on lease, which expires in 1835 . . .	1	13	4
One piece of land, whereon stood two tenements with gardens, on the south side of Friar-street, under a lease, expires 1835 . . .	0	13	6
Three messuages, with gardens on the north side of Friar-street . . .	2	10	9
One room over the the gate-way leading into the church yard, and adjoining the church, under lease, expires in 1879 . . .	0	16	0
Two tenements on the west side of Gutter-lane, under a lease, expires in 1836 . . .	3	0	0
One tenement and a stable on the west side of Gutter-lane, on lease, expires 1836 . . .	2	0	0
Two half acres of meadow in Aston Mead . . .	0	10	0
Four tenements on the west side of Horn-street . . .	4	0	0
A quit rent of a messuage, on the west side of the Market-place . . .	0	1	0
A quit rent of a tenement, on the north side of Broad-street . . .	0	1	1½
A quit rent of a messuage, on the south side of Friar-street . . .	0	0	1
An annual rent for the vault of Richard Curtis, Esq. in the north chancel of this church . . .	0	6	8
	<hr/>		
	£16	14	2½

In Mr. J. Dean's account of the possessions belonging to this parish, three messuages are added, which, however, do not appear to make part of the above terrier; two are in Cross Street, let at £12 16 0, and one in Friar Street "with land bounded by the Vasterns on the North, let at £12, making a further total of £24 16 0. As the parish consists of abbey land, it has neither glebe nor tithes belonging to it; except, says the church-book, "an occasional tithe-pig;" but the revenues arise from benefactions, with Easter-dues, surplice fees, and such contingent emoluments.

Previous to the dissolution, the presentation to the vicarage was in the Abbot of Reading; at which time the income of the living consisted in the contributions of rich clothiers, officers, and servants of the abbey;

half of the offerings made to the chapel at Caversham Bridge, also belonged to the vicar of this parish, with the money arising from dirges, creeping to the cross, and other popish ceremonies; the abbey, moreover, supplied him with twenty shillings, yearly, for his clothing; seven pence per week, for his commons, the same allowance of bread and beer as was furnished to the monks, a lodging in the abbey, and a horse for his use, when he attended the bishop's visitations. The living remained vacant for thirteen years after the dissolution, when it became difficult to find a gentleman who would accept the cure, as there was a heavy arrear due to the crown, for the tenths, subsidies &c., and only the Easter offerings of the poor inhabitants left, to pay it with; Queen Elizabeth, in consequence, forgave the debt, and directed that the living, before rated in her books at £27, should be valued at £10 only, so that the vicar now pays neither first fruits, nor tenths. In 1640, the patronage of the living was granted, at the request, it is supposed of Archbishop Laud, to St. John's College, Oxford; and six years afterwards, the maintenance of the minister being but fifty pounds per ann., and there being then a thousand communicants, an additional yearly sum of fifty pounds was ordered to be paid, (for the increase of the maintenance) of the rent reserved to the dean and chapter of Lincoln, out of the impropriate rectory of Langford and Little Farringdon, in this county. The revenue has considerably increased by various donations, made from time to time. Laud left £50 per annum to the vicar as long as he shall reside upon the vicarage. The Rev. P. Vaughan bequeathed £10, to be applied to the establishment of daily prayers in the afternoon. Mr. Edw. Hungerford left by will £200, in trust to the Corporation of Reading, to be paid by them to the vicar of St. Lawrence for the time being, so long as he shall read the common prayer of the Church of England, every day between the hours of two and seven o'clock, in person, or by his sufficient substitute. Fifty pounds of this sum was applied with the approbation of the trustees, &c., towards the erecting of the gallery on the north side

of the church, the rent of the pews in which belong to the vicar. There are various other bequests of the same nature, as well as sums left for sermons to be preached on particular festivals; part of the interest of Mrs. Veasey's legacy of £805 is appropriated to ten poor industrious housekeepers and widows, in this parish, and not receiving alms, one guinea each; and "two guineas each to two servant-girls of the borough of Reading, who have lived two years in one place, and can have a good character from the place they so lived in."

List of Vicars.

Rev. Sir John Serne	1480	— Chandler	A.D. 1597
John Andrews	1484	Abraham Grey	1602
Nicholas More	1497	John Dennison	1603
Sir William Symys	1499	Theophilus Taylor	1618
Thomas Justice	1504	Thomas Lloyd, D.D.	1640
John Maynesforth	1529	John Pordage*	1645
John Radley	1551	Thomas Gilbert†	1647
John Smith	1574	Simon Ford‡	1651

* Afterwards Rector of Bradfield in Berks, from which dignity he was ejected by Cromwell's Commissioners, in 1654, they affirming that he denied the Deity of Christ, and that he acknowledged such things respecting spirits, as proved, "he was far gone in one of the most incurable kinds of madness, the frenzy of enthusiasm." He was reinstated in his rectory at the Restoration; and was the author of several dramatic pieces, and of a translation of the *Troades*.

† Subsequently rector of Edgemont in Salop, his native county, where he was known as *Bishop of Shropshire*; having become an Independent, he was ejected, at the Restoration, for non-conformity, and died in great distress, in 1694.

‡ While vicar of St. Lawrence's, Dr. Ford had been very active in supporting the election of Colonel Hammond for this borough. The colonel was the person to whom Charles I, surrendered himself, on his retiring from Hampton Court, in 1647; the circumstances of Hammond's election may probably amuse our readers; the account we copy is quoted by Coates from a small 4to. pamphlet of six pages, published after the proceeding, in 1654.

"The Sheriff of the County having proclaimed the writ for summoning a parliament to meet at Westminster, the third of September next; Mr. Frewen, the Mayor of Reading, appointed Wednesday, the 28th of June last, at ten of the clock, for the inhabitants of the said town to meet in the Town Hall, in order to the choice of a burgess; and that at the day and hour afore-

Thomas Tuer	1660	Thomas Shute, D.D.	1747
John Braster	1671	Jeremiah Nicholson, D.D.	1763
Serjeant Hughes	1679	John Nicholls, D.D.	1772
Phanuel Bacon	1690	John Green	1789
Rev. E. Owen	1732	William Wise, D.D.	1812
William Bondry	1733		

Mr. Man thinks that the foundation of this church gave rise to the great fair held here annually, on St. Mathew's day, at which time the parish at its own expense, erected a booth, in the Forbury, and received the emoluments arising from the price of admission to the religious plays that were exhibited on such

said. the writ for choice should be read. The people met accordingly, between nine and ten of the clock. The mayor and aldermen withdrew themselves in private (as did appear) to chuse a parliament man ; for, as soon as the clock had stricken ten, his worship, with all his retinue, came into open court, which being full of inhabitants, the crier proclaimed silence, then the town-clerk, with an audible voice, did read the writ for the choice of a burgess as aforesaid ; which being done, the mayor made a speech to the people ; such a one as it was, however, was not much unlike his actions : which speech, (for the singularity thereof) I have here inserted ; and it is as followeth ;

“ ‘ Whv ! d'ye hear me ? Here is a writ directed to me to chuse a burgess to serve in parliament, and we have chosen Colonel Hammond, and him we will have, and I will return the writ for him.’ ‘ What, right or wrong, Mr. Mayor ? ’ said a gentleman that stood by. ‘ I,’ said Mr. Mayor, ‘ we have chosen him, and we will return the writ for him : and therefore you may go home again, (said he to the inhabitants.) Is not the writ directed to us ? (said he, meaning himself, and aldermen ;) and we have chosen Colonel Hammond, and we will have him.’ It was then said, that a considerable part of the electors excepted against Colonel Hammond, and had made choice of Capt. Castle ; ‘ a man of conscience, wisdom, and valour,’ and there appeared five to one for Capt. Castle.

“ The Mayor still affirmed that the power of election lay in himself and brother aldermen, and refused a poll ; but ‘ drew the inhabitants into a field called the Forbury ; and in the said field the difference remained, for matter of number, as before on Captain Castle's side.’ The mayor still refused a poll, and returned to the Town Hall, where he took such names as were brought him ; ‘ parson Fowler standing up above the people, in the mayor's presence, vaunting as in a stage-play, and persuading the people to subscribe for Colonel Hammond.’

“ Such was the election farce of 1654, which has been frequently since repeated, with all the old *dramatis persona*, from Mr. Mayor down to ‘ parson Fowler.’ ”

occasions; and, in support of his opinion, he quotes the following entries from the churchwardens' books for 1507 :—

	£	s.	d.
Received the Sunday before Bartymass, for the play in the Forbury	1	3	8
Received for alder poles, left of the play	0	0	5
Paid for nails for the sepulchre, and for rosin for the resurrection play	0	2	0
Paid a carter for carrying off pipes and hogsheads in the Forbury	0	0	2
Paid to the labourers in the Forbury for setting up the poles for the scaffold	0	0	9
Paid to the beer man, for beer for the play in the Forbury	0	0	10
Paid for 2½ ells of crest cloth "for to mak Eve a cote"	0	0	10
Paid for a book of the resurrection play	0	0	6

The May-day play of this parish appears to have been the favourite pageant of Robin Hood and his men; we shall conclude our account of St. Lawrence's with a list of the expences incurred on one of these occasions.

Anno. 1499.

Received for gathering of the May-play, called Robin Hood, on the fair day	0	19	0
Paid for a coat for Robin Hood	0	5	4
Paid for a supper to Robin Hood and his company, when he came from Finchampstead	0	1	6
Paid for making the church clean, against the day of drinking in the said church*	0	0	4
Paid for flesh, spice, and baking of pasties against the said drinking	0	2	9
Paid for ale at the same drinking	0	1	6
Paid for horse-meat to the horses for the kings of Colen, on May-day	0	0	6
Paid for livery, on our fair day	0	1	4

Anno. 1531.

Paid for five ells of canvass for a coat for Maid Marian†	0	1	6½
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* This was the *church ale*, when the principal actors were entertained in the church, with the profits arising from the exhibition.

† Mr. Douce, the celebrated Antiquary, considers the story of Robin Hood and Maid Marian, as a dramatic fiction borrowed from a French pastoral drama of the eleventh century, entitled

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Voltaire ascribes to Gregory of Naziansum, a poet and father of the church, and, we believe, a canonized saint also, the invention of religious plays; the philosopher of Fernay relates that Gregory persuaded the people of Byzantium to banish from their stage the sublime compositions of Sophocles and Euripides, and to represent in their place, stories selected from the Scriptures, modelled on the plan of the ancient Greek tragedy, with the substitution of Christian Hymns for the dull and impertinent chorus; the sage of Naziansum composed several of these sacred dramas, but none of them had the success of the *Œdipus* and *Electra*; the inestimable remains of the old Greek dramatists have been preserved with sacred care; while, of Gregory's pieces there is now only one, *Christ's Passion*, still extant. From the spiritual drama of Constantinople, the Italians are supposed to have derived, and framed, in the depth of the dark ages, that barbarous species of theatrical representation called Mysteries, or sacred plays. Warton, in his history of English poetry, has, however, suggested, that these dramas were composed, not for the theatres of Constantinople, to expel their rightful lords, Sophocles, Euripides, and Menander, but for the Christian schools, into which were introduced a sacred Homer, (that is to say, an Old Testament, as far as life of Saul, thrown into hexameters)—a sacred Pindar,—and a sacred Plato, (into an imitation of whose dialogues the gospels were cast), as well as sacred dramas on scriptural subjects; be this as it may, the invention of religious dramatic poetry is of

“*Le Jeu du Berger et de la Bergere.*” There is, however, a zealous host of antiquaries who maintain, on the other hand, that *Marian* was the assumed name of Matilda, daughter of Baron Fitzwalter. This lady, according to the more approved legend, married Robin Hood, the outlawed Earl of Huntingdon, in order to escape the dishonourable offers of King John. On the death of her husband she retired to the Priory at Little Dunmow, where she died, through wearing a poisoned bracelet, sent to her by the revengeful monarch for the purpose of destroying her. Her tomb is still shewn at the priory; it consists of an alabaster effigy reposing on a grey slab. The face, though much disfigured, is said to bear traces of its former beauty.

still earlier date; the Hindoos had, centuries before this, their long and heavy plays performed only on their religious festivals, and the same fact is well known with regard to the Athenians. The Jews themselves had subjects from the Bible exhibited in the dramatic form: part of a Jewish piece, taken from Exodus, is preserved in Greek iambics, written by one Ezekiel, who stiles himself the poet of the Hebrews. It forms, however, no part of our present task to trace the origin and continuance of this subject in other nations; it will be sufficient as a passing illustration of some of the entries made in our church books, to notice its appearance and sojourn among ourselves. The sacred Christian drama then, is with just probability supposed to have arisen in England, simultaneously with most of the other European countries, out of the strong religious excitement, the *revival*, in modern phrase, which prevailed at the time of the first crusades; "the sacred enthusiasm which had seized all orders, sought out every possible means of awakening, of communicating, of maintaining its contagious influence over the universal soul of man. Of the clergy, the pious hailed, with devout joy this golden opportunity of propagating the saving doctrines of the cross; the worldly, that of more strongly rivetting on the very heart of man their own spiritual influence." This species of representation was, in fact, the only means possessed by the clergy of the period, of teaching the scriptures to a population that could not read; and the pieces, written by men nearly as illiterate as the audience they addressed, abound with inconsistencies and anachronisms, and make such work of geography as would puzzle Mr. Arrow-smith himself; being performed, generally in churches and almost always by monks, they were listened to with attention and respect; it is easy to imagine their effect; they taught the facts of Christianity, but nothing of its doctrines; men came to them and bowed at the antics of some buffoon, ere they had well done weeping at the sufferings of our Saviour; they saw Judas hanged, and clapped their hands; they gazed with reverence at a representation of the

last day, made the sign of the cross, and thought themselves instructed.

At the period of the reformation religious plays were produced for the purpose of encouraging or condemning the establishment of protestantism; in some of these productions, Luther and his wife were exhibited in the most unfavourable colours that party spirit and furious zeal could invent, while the opposite side brought forth, partly miracle, partly moral plays, written in a "king Cambyeses rein," avowedly to favour the cause of the reformation. The latter were applauded to the echo during the reign of Henry VIII, but the old orthodoxy got their revenge under his successor, when the revival of miracle plays was encouraged, and severe inhibitions issued against the representation of farcical interludes caricaturing the Romish clergy; the protestants, however, re-assumed their licence in the reign of Elizabeth, when they patronised the Moralities, the introduction of allegorical personages into the scriptural drama, a species of composition which, dull as it was, though perhaps useful and interesting at the time, soon superseded in popularity, the strictly religious dramas of the former generation; the Moralities, when they had enjoyed their full share of popular approbation, gave way in their turn to the intellectual and instructive drama, that may be said to owe its invention to Marlowe, and its perfection to Shakspeare. The splendid shows of Robin Hood, and the Kings of Cologne, however, retained their powers of attraction to a very late period. Bishop Latimer relates the following incident respecting the former pageant, in one of his sermons preached before Edward VI. "Coming to a certain town, on a holiday, to preach, I found the church door fast locked: I tarried there half an hour and more, and at last the key was found, and one of the parishioners comes to me, and says, 'Sir, this is a busy day with us, we cannot hear you; it is Robin Hood's day, the parish are gone abroad to gather for Robin Hood; I pray you let (hinder) them not.' I thought my rochet would have been regarded, but it would not serve, it was fain to give place to Robin

Hood and his men." In the entry in the above list, mentioning the disbursement of sixpence for provision for the horses of "the Kings of Colen," Mr. Man thinks Coates wrong in supposing it refers to the celebrated show of the Wise Men, but fancies it is an allusion to the King of Coley, or person who had gained the title by his success that year in shooting at the Butts; but there appears no reason for doubting what the latter gentleman has advanced respecting the derivation of the title, he has copied the entry from the church-wardens book in its original spelling, "*Kings of Colen*;" this Mr. Man has transcribed "King of Coley," a material alteration; in justice to Mr. M. however, we may mention, that the pageant of the Kings was probably never performed but at Easter, Christmas, and Corpus Christi day, which, if such were the fact, rather favours his supposition of the entry alluding to a King of Coley, or at least to some successful competitor in archery, May-day being one of the great shooting holidays. The religious pageant of the Kings, was in honour of the three wise men of the East, who visited our Saviour, at his birth; their bones, we are told, were brought to Constantinople, by Helena, the indefatigable and ubiquitous mother of Constantine; they were subsequently transported to Milan, by Eustorpius, the bishop of that see, and finally deposited at Cologne by Archbishop Rainold. They lie in the cathedral of St. Peter, in a large purple shrine spangled with gold, set upon a brazen pedestal, within a square mausoleum of marble and jasper. Their names Gasper, Melchion, and Balthazar, are inscribed in purple characters, on a small grate, ornamented with an immense number of large rich pearls and precious stones, among which is an oriental topaz, the size of a pigeon's egg, and of the value of 30,000 crowns; the head of each king bears a golden crown, decorated with costly jewels; the whole is lit up by a profusion of wax candles, in silver branches, which burn night and day; and is opened for inspection and worship every morning at nine o'clock, provided two canons of the cathedral be

present who may watch over the safety of this great lion of Cologne.*

All traces of these exhibitions are now lost among us, but the sacred drama still flourishes in Catholic countries, either on the stage, (where the Testament is nightly turned into melo-dramas, and listened to, as we can assert in our own experience, with eagerness), or among the puppet-shows, where they trifle with serious subjects, still more indecently. Mr. Gifford in a note to his beautiful edition of Jonson, says: "I have seen, in one of the chief cities in France, the Crucifixion played by puppets, and though the sight was inexpressibly revolting, I could not perceive that the people, who were probably accustomed to it, were either shocked or disgusted." Racine's *Athalie* and *Esther*, and the *Giuseppe*, of Metastasio, are familiar to us, rather as sacred poems than acting plays; there has been a dramatic piece represented in our own age, the subject of which was scriptural, but whose name and scene of action were changed in respect to the feelings of a protestant country; the piece was *Pietro L'Eremita* which attracted multitudes, not half of whom were conscious, they were witnessing Rossini's splendid opera of *Mose in Egitto*.

* The sanctity of the Kings of Cologne is thus referred to, in "Gammer Gurton's Needle," that remarkably delicate Comedy said to have been written by Still, who was afterwards Bishop of Bath and Wells.

"I will have you swere by our dere lady of *Bullaine*,
Saint *Dunstone* and Saint *Dennyke*, with the three
Kings of *Kullain*,
That ye shall keep it secret."—A. 2. 3. 2,

ST. GILES'S CHURCH, &c.

The parish of St. Giles is the most extensive of the three parishes into which this borough is divided ; it includes the hamlet of Whitley, but the united population does not materially exceed that either of St. Mary's or St. Lawrence's. It consists of 2,273 acres, of which, 1,014, having been formerly the property of Reading Abbey, are not chargeable with tithe. Out of the number of acres tithe-free, 112 are within the boundary of the corporation, and 902 are in the hamlet of Whitley, where the abbey had considerable possessions, obtained by donation or purchase.* Whitley is assessed to the poor and church-rates of this parish, but not being within the jurisdiction of the corporation, it comes under the cognizance of the county magistrates ; the inhabitants of the hamlet attempted some years ago, by a law suit, to separate themselves from the other part of the parish, with regard to the maintenance of the poor, but the attempt was unsuccessful, and it has not, we believe, been since repeated.†

The parish of St. Giles is bounded, on the north, by that of St. Lawrence ; and on the south, by Shinfield ; St. Mary's parish lies on the west ; and its eastern

* At the time of the dissolution, the manor was valued at the annual rent of £26. 18s. 4d., and the adjustment of the park, at £3. (See page 88.) Whitley contained also, extensive pleasure grounds, and fish ponds, which are now occupied by a farm. Queen Mary granted the manor to Sir Francis Englefield. Queen Elizabeth, by her charter, gave 50 oaks out of the park, to the corporation of Reading, and granted the rest of the estate to Sir Francis and Dame Catherine Knollys ; it has passed, successively, into the possession of several families, and is now the property of Lady Milman.

† It was ordered by the magistrates, at the quarter sessions for the County of Berks, April 23rd, 1649, "that the inhabitants within the liberty of Whitley shall, according to a former order, pay the yearly sum of one and twenty pounds, four shillings, and four pence, monthly apportioned according to the statute, for the relief of the poor in the parish of St. Giles ; and that the inhabitants of the said parish, within the said borough, shall pay the yearly sum of thirty and five pounds."

boundary is formed by Sonning; or, according to Mr. Man's more detailed notice of its situation, "it is situated on the south side of the river Kennet, and is connected with the other parishes by the High-bridge, and Seven-bridges. There are two small islands belonging to this parish, on the river Kennet; that, on the west side of High-bridge, is separated from St. Lawrence's parish, by a water-course branching out above the pound-lock, which, after passing under the north end of the Bear Inn, takes the name of the Black ditch, and re-enters the Kennet on the north east end of the Island. The other commences at the above mentioned lock, and extends easterly as far as the mill; it is divided from the main land on the north by the navigable branch of the river, and on the south by the mill stream."

It has been remarked that wherever there is a church dedicated to St. Giles, in a town, it is situated at one end of it; alluding, it is supposed to the conduct of the holy Ægidius, as the saint is otherwise called, who used to dwell in some suburb to avoid public notice, and perform his cures and miracles upon the afflicted poor and desolate. Such is in some measure the situation of the church in this parish. The period of its erection is not known, but its site was probably beyond the town, a characteristic which no longer distinguishes it, as houses lengthening into streets have gradually encompassed it on all sides.

The church, in its old state, consisted of a nave and side aisles divided by arches supported by massive pillars; the pillars and arches were of chalk, and, on removing the former, during the repairs and improvements made under the present rector, they were discovered to stand on the gravel without any other foundation. A very large sum was expended, some years ago, in casing the weaker parts of some pillars which supported the roof on the north side, and, which had been observed to decline very considerably from their original perpendicular direction. In its present state the church consists of three aisles, the side ones being separated from the centre by three pointed arches divided by two light clustered columns.

The gallery interferes with the otherwise agreeable effect of this style, as it is hebdagonal, and one of its sides occupies an arch of each aisle; the eighth side, which would complete the octagonal appearance of the interior, being formed by a recess leading to the altar. The pews partake of the disposition of the gallery, and are so arranged that the congregation form nearly a circle round the minister.

In 1784,* a gallery was built, by subscription, over the chancel, as the church was not found sufficiently large to accommodate the vast increase the congregation received when Mr. Cadogan held the living; but it was removed during the late alterations. Previous to the reign of Elizabeth, there were four images here, viz: those of St. Giles, St. Christopher, St. Mary, and St. John, with an altar dedicated to the latter saint, and the usual high altar; these were removed in 1560, when the pulling down the images cost the small sum of four-pence, and two shillings and eight-pence were disbursed for destroying the altars and carting away the rubbish; an additional penny being paid, the same year, for white

* A. D. 1784.—This year a gallery was built by subscription, and charitable collections by Mr. Romaine. The subscription amounted to the sum of - - - - - £456 0s. 8½d.
—Churchwardens' Book.

Mr. Cecil, in his life of Mr. Cadogan, says that the latter gentleman proposed taking down entirely at his own charge, an irregular and decayed part of the church, and rebuilding it so as to correspond with the opposite aisle, and to afford much additional room. But the offer was rejected because it was suspected that after Mr. Cadogan's death, there would be more than sufficient room for all comers, and that the alteration would encrease the expense of future repairs, for which contingency Mr. Cadogan in vain offered to secure an adequate annual sum from his own property. He, however, made himself accountable for the whole expense of the new gallery, which went nearly round the church; "though afterwards it was chiefly defrayed by voluntary subscription." In 1789 the congregation was so increased, that the church, with its additional gallery was found insufficient to contain the numbers who sought admittance; "application was made therefore for a further enlargement, the expense of which, Mr. C. undertook to defray, but the vestry refused to admit it."

liming the rood. In 1519, the sum of nine pounds was paid for an organ, and the salary of the player, according to Mr. Coates's copy of the churchwardens books, was, in 1543, four pounds four shillings per annum, and in the following year, four pounds ten; while our other local historian, Mr. Man, notices, as a proof of the great value of circulating coin at this period, that the annual salary of the organist was only three shillings and four-pence. We are not able to reconcile these two adverse statements, but we are inclined to believe in Mr. Man's, because we find that the priest of Jesus's mass received in one of the above years, thirteen shillings and four-pence "towards his wages for a year," which sum probably formed nearly the whole of his annual remuneration, and we can with difficulty believe that the organist received a so much higher stipend than even one of the subordinate ministers.* The singers in the choir were paid thirteen and four-pence, yearly, and the clerk, who also taught "the children for the quere," received twelve shillings; 1578 the organ was taken down, and the pipes sold for a pound sterling; the present instrument is nearly new and of a very fine tone. The church was furnished with a clock prior to 1518; and in 1583 a clock with chimes, those "corals for grown gentlemen," was put up, which cost three pounds, six shillings, and eight pence, and which was replaced by a new one, after the lapse of a century and a quarter, towards the expence of which, the parish subscribed eleven pounds, twelve shillings and three-pence. These cliimes were removed in 1790, when the bells were recast, and their number reduced to seven, as the tower was not considered sufficiently strong to support the weight of a greater number. During the seige of the town in 1643, by the parliamentary forces, the king's soldiers placed some artillery on the summit of the tower, which speedily caused the destruction of the latter, for the ordinance was so well directed and proved so galling to the besiegers, that they raised a battery against it, and soon reduced

* A.D. 1524. To the organ player, for his wages £0 13 4.—
Churchwardens' Book.

it to a heap of rubbish. After the siege it was repaired in a very imperfect manner, but its appearance was, subsequently, much improved, and a gothic porch, of no particular beauty however, added to the entrance ; it now forms a square building, with graduated buttresses at the angles, and an embattled roof, with low pinnacles ; its height is fifty-four feet, and it is crowned by a spire, which was erected in 1790, at the expence of £573 19s. 0d. it is of Riga fir, covered with copper, and has an elevation of rather more than 70 feet. The churchwarden's books for 1720, contain an entry of two pounds sterling being paid for a dove under the canopy, and £3 17s. for "the gilt angel, brass lock, and bolt." In 1593, when ministers used hour glasses, and preached against time, the parish paid 5s. for a candlestick and branch, "to set the hour glass on;" but these have long since disappeared. Over the altar was formerly three windows of pointed architecture, with mouldings of small saxon pillars; but these have been removed and one large elegant stained glass window substituted, at an expence of upwards of £600, which sum was raised by subscription, and to which the present vicar contributed liberally. There are no monuments of any general interest; but there is a marble tablet, the simple detail on which is very affecting; it is erected to the memory of eight children of the "Reverend Haviland, John Hiley and Eleanor his wife," who, out of a family of nine children, lost all but one before they attained the age of twenty-five; some of them, indeed, according to the memorial on the stone, died at a very tender age, happily for them; for as the inscription on the tablet ends, "of such is the kingdom of heaven." The vestry which formerly stood at the north-west corner of the church is now on the north side of the chancel; over the old vestry there was a room containing a small collection of divinity and classics, the gift of the Reverend Phillip Vaughan. The books and catalogue were arranged, and rescued from the damp, and the room repaired, in 1780, by Mr. Cadogan, at his own expence; they were again removed, during the alterations, (almost rebuilding,

indeed,) of this church, made since the Reverend H. R. Duckinfield became Vicar, but we are not aware where they are now deposited. Vol. 3, of *Magna Britannia*, mentions a legacy of books, bequeathed to this church by Mr. William Jemmat, but the bequest has been lost. In the churchwardens' accounts for 1640, are mentioned "Two books of Martyrs, upon frames, the gift of Mr. W. Jemmatt, rector of this church." One of the brass chandeliers was presented for the use of the congregation, in 1640, by Alice Clark, as the inscription on it testifies; the other is inscribed, "The gift of a friend, A.D. 1784, when the galleries were erected in this church."*

The brick walls on the north and east sides of the church yard, were built in 1622; there was also a wall on the west side, next the high road, at a much earlier date, and which was strengthened with buttresses in 1592; as this wall, however, protruded into the road, considerably beyond the present line of foot-path, it was taken down a few years ago, part of the church yard cut off, and the remainder enclosed by a handsome iron railing; "the expence of this improvement was defrayed by a general subscription among all the inhabitants of the town, who rightly considered that whatever embellishments are made in either of the parishes, tends equally to the pleasure and convenience of the whole body of the inhabitants." In 1819 a piece of ground was purchased on the west side of Horn-street, opposite the church, and consecrated as a new burial ground.

The following extracts from the churchwardens' accounts will serve to shew at what periods this edifice has undergone important repairs :—

1628. For "new building and making arches and pillars on the south side of the middle range of the church," and for reparation of the whole church :—

Recd. upon the nine months' tax within the town £38 4 0

Item—Recd. upon the ratements at Whitley . . . 4 5 0

1654. In this and the following year, the north side of the church, with the south and west porches, were repaired.

* Gas being now used in lighting the church, the chandeliers have been removed.

1788. In this and the following year, were collected by a rate of one shilling in the pound, for the repairs of the church, the sum of £284 5s. 6d.

The last repairs, as we have previously noticed, were made under the present Vicar, and the appearance of the old church has consequently been not only materially changed, but also materially improved.

In the terrier, delivered at the primary visitation of Shute, Bishop of Salisbury, in 1783, there is said to be a certain salary of £26 3s. 1d. arising from lands, houses, and quit-rents in the parish, appropriated for keeping the church in repair: the writings concerning which are in the custody of the churchwardens, "who are also charged with the repair of the edifices, and the church-yard fence." The whole of the glebe is about half an acre of garden attached to the vicarage house, which is situated on the south side of the cemetery, and is a commodious building, which has, from time to time, been considerably enlarged and improved.

"During the papal hierarchy, sanctuaries were attached to many of our churches, and scarcely any town of consequence was without one of these places of refuge, from whence malefactors of every description could bid defiance to the laws, with impunity: and so sacred were those receptacles considered at that time, that no one, not even the monarch on the throne dared to violate them, however tyrannical in disposition and conduct towards his subjects on other occasions. One of those places, and probably united to the privileges of this church, was, in what is now called the Crown-lane; how far it extended is uncertain; but it is not unlikely that it included the whole space between that lane and the church-yard." The inviolability of sanctuaries was not, however, so strictly observed at all times, as the above extract intimates. The most ancient asylum of the sort, in this country, was the Abbey church of Westminster, made so by Edward the Confessor; but Henry VIII did not scruple to deny the privilege to persons guilty of capital offences, and made it available to others only during the space of forty days, at the end of which

time, the refugees were obliged either to abide the course of the law, or leave the realm. In fact means were always found to make the privilege useless, when the stronger powers were so inclined: in the troubled reign of Richard II., Shackel was seized before the altar, at Westminster, and his friend Hanle slain in the choir, for refusing to give up a prisoner to John, Duke of Lancaster. A few years after, Chief Justice Trysillian, the defender of the rights of Richard II., was torn from the sanctuary, by the turbulent barons, and hanged at Tyburn. Edward V. was born in the Abbot's house, at Westminster, where his mother Elizabeth had sought refuge; that unhappy woman was in the same sanctuary when she was compelled to abandon her children to the protectorship of Richard III. It is probable that the privilege of asylum, possessed by the church of St. Giles, extended only to debtors, and perhaps to persons guilty of misdemeanors. The sanctuary for life was never held by a church, if there was an abbey in the same town; in such a case the monastery would claim the right of throwing its mantle of protection round the capital offender, as long as he had means to pay for it; but his security always decreased in proportion as his finances failed.

Rent Roll of St. Giles' Parish, taken in 1518.

	<i>Quit Rents.</i>	<i>£</i>	<i>s.</i>	<i>d.</i>
For a tenement on the west side of London-street, for a year		0	0	1
Ditto on the same side, between Mill-lane on the north side, and the tenement of T. Pockeridge on the south side		0	0	6
The tenement annexed		0	0	6
A tenement on the same side		0	1	0
Ditto ditto		0	0	3
Ditto ditto		0	1	6
Ditto next to the tenement of the Abbot and Con- vent of Reading		0	1	3
Ditto annexed, now in the hands of the Church- wardens		0	0	2
A tenement on the same side, next to the void ground of the Abbot and Convent		0	0	2
A tenement on the same side		0	0	2
A tenement on the west side of Syvian-street		0	0	6

The ground annexed, late a tenement	0	0	8
A tenement on the same side	0	0	2
A tenement on the east side of London-street, next the tenement of the Abbot and Convent	0	0	3
A tenement on the same side, next the tenements of the Abbot and Convent, on the north and south	0	0	1
A tenement on the same side, between W. Goldore, priest, and the tenement of the Abbot and Convent	0	0	2
A tenement annexed	0	0	2
Ditto	0	0	2
Of the Abbot and Convent for a tenement on the same side	0	0	1
A tenement annexed. between the tenement of the Abbot and Convent, on the south, and the tene- ment called the Hind's Head, for a year	0	0	1
A tenement annexed, called the Hind's Head	0	0	6
Of the Abbot and Convent, for the tenement annex- ed, called <i>The Cage</i>	0	0	1
A plot of land on the south side of Mill-lane	0	1	0
A tenement next the flood-gates, on the north side of Mill-lane	0	0	6
A void ground on the north side of the same lane	0	0	1
A tenement on the west side of the Old-street, next Catels-grove gates*	0	0	1
Of the sub-chamberer of the Abbey, for a tenement in Minster-street†	0	0	4
Of the Abbot and Convent, for a tenement on the east side of London-street, called the White Horse	0	1	0
Of the said Abbot for a tenement on the south side of the same street, called the George	0	1	3
Of the said Abbot, for a tenement called Pollard's sett	0	1	2
Of Thomas Beke, gent. for three tenements	0	2	10
A garden in Syvier-street	0	0	1
An acre of land in Orleugh-field	0	0	1
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Rents.

A tenement on the east side of Syvier-street, next the lands of the Abbot and Convent	0	4	8
A tenement on the same side, next the ground of the Abbot and Convent	0	7	6
A tenement on the west side of the same street	0	6	0
Ditto	0	6	0
Of W. Green, the priest, for a tenement on the west side of London-street	0	8	0

* In Coates's extracts from the church register, this tene-
ment is charged 6d.

† Or, according to Coates, 4s.

A tenement on the same side, next the tenement belonging to the alms house	0	8	0
For certain tenements on the same side, called the Rents	1	0	0
For a tenement on the west side of the Olde-street	0	4	0
For a tenement annexed, and joining to the ground called the Gravel pit	0	7	0
A tenement on the east side of the Olde-street, between the ground of the vicarage on the north, and a tenement on the south	0	10	6
	<u>£4</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>8</u>

Mr. Man thinks that the small proportion of freehold estates within the town, is explained by the repeated mention, in the above Rent Roll, of tenements belonging to the Abbot and Convent ; all whose possessions devolved to the crown at the dissolution.

A short time previous to the year 1599, some charitable bequests were left to the church of St. Giles, consisting of messuages, yearly rents, hereditaments, &c., the profits of which, it was intended by the bequeathers, should be appropriated to the repairs of the church, and the maintenance of the bells and seats there, and that if any overplus remained, it should be applied to the relief of the poor of the parish. These legacies were, accordingly, for many years, put in use, and executed, agreeably to the wills of the testators, till about the period above mentioned they were claimed by a certain Jeffery Cowper, an inhabitant of the parish, and who had formerly served the office of churchwarden, under the pretence that these messuages, rents, and premises, known by the appellation of the Church Lands, were concealed from the Queen's Majesty, and having got a great part of them conveyed to himself, he threatened suit for the same, if his title to them were opposed. There was a difficulty in disproving his claim, as many of the original deeds of gift, and other papers of considerable importance to the evidence had been stolen from a chest in the vestry room.

There was an act, however, passed in the 39th of Queen Elizabeth, entitled " an act to reform deceits and breaches of trust touching lands given to charitable uses ;" and this case concerning the Church

Lands of St. Giles, came before the commissioners appointed to put the act in force. The commission which sat at Newbury, consisted of Sir Thomas Parry, Sir Humphry Forster, Edmund Farriplace, Esq., Read Stafford, Esq., and some others, and their duty was to enquire, by a jury, what lands, tenements, leases, goods, chattels, and sums of money, or other things, had, at any time before, been given by any persons, to and for the relief and maintenance of the poor within the county of Berks; and whether they had been employed according to the intention of the founders; an exemplification of the letters patent granting the commission remains in the custody of the churchwardens of St. Giles, and the presentment which the jurors returned to this parish, is also preserved among its records.

The jury found that there were eleven messuages, &c., situated in London-street, Sievyer-street, and Horn-street or Old-street, with the sum of eleven shillings and five pence of annual rents arising from other messuages then in the tenure of various persons in the above streets; and that they had been given and conveyed to certain persons, (with whose names the jury were not acquainted) for the charitable purposes we have already mentioned, and that they had been so appropriated till the new claim to them was raised by Mr. Jeffery Cowper, in order to defraud the said charitable uses, and make undue gain to himself. This award was entirely adverse to the alleged right of the *quondam* churchwarden; and the commission at Newbury issued a decree in accordance with it, directing that the several bequests of lands, tenements, and hereditaments, called by the name of the Church Lands, should for ever continue to be employed agreeably to the intentions of the original testators, and in no other way. As it also appeared to the commissioners, from the evidence of witnesses, and the production of various documents, as well as from views of the ancient register book of the church, that the churchwardens had possessed an uncontrolled management over these lands, tenements, &c., and had exercised, as owners, the power of letting them

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and had given up all the profits arising from them to the appropriation for which they were originally destined, it was the opinion of the said commissioners that the churchwardens were a corporation by prescription, capable of estates of lands, to the said church, as well as goods; but, in decreeing their future agency, neither they nor their successors were allowed to grant any lease, "or demise of the same, or any part thereof," for a longer period than twenty-one years, in possession, and not in reversion; and they were not authorised to make a lease even for that term, without previously obtaining the consent of a majority of the head burgesses and second burgesses of the borough, who were resident within the parish; which consent was to be registered, and preserved with a covenant of the lease, &c., as future evidence, in case of need, of the property of the said lands. The churchwardens were further ordered to account for the fines, rents, and other profits, annually before the parishioners, as they had been before accustomed to do; and the decree empowered the mayor, on the refusal of a churchwarden to produce his accounts, or to pay his arrears, if any should exist on his going out of office, or on his being proved to have been negligent of his trust, to commit him to prison till such arrears were paid, and till he had given due satisfaction for every other abuse of which he might be justly charged. Such is the substance of the decree, made at Newbury, the 18th day of April, in the 41st year of Queen Elizabeth; and, in accordance, with the orders and directions it contained, William Malthus and William Bennett, then churchwardens, gave their consent, and granted new leases to the several tenants.

The presentation to the living of St. Giles, is in the Lord Chancellor; it is valued, in the King's books, at £14 17s. 3½d, and the yearly tenths, at £1 9s. 8½d. The revenues of the vicarage are principally derived from the great and small tythes of the lands within the parish and hamlet of Whitley, "a very small proportion only of the original possessions of the abbey being tithe-free;" the vicar being entitled, also, to

the Easter offerings, surplice fees, &c. The appointment of the clerk rests with the vicar, but he is paid by the parish, and by the usual fees and perquisites of office.

List of the Vicars.

Under the Patronage of the Abbot and Convent.

Walter de Holme	1326	Thomas Wyland	1463
John Crowe	1329	Robert Gleya	—
Phillip Leverech	1334	William Edyndon	1493
John Ymmere	1388	John Enon	1520
William Sandford	1417	Richard Snow	1533
John Sandford	1419	John More	1540
John Smyth	1449	John Emery	1548
Robert Brown	1457	William Webb	1551
John Walbrond	1462		

Under the Patronage of the Crown.

John Walton	1561	William Jemmatt	1648
Maurice Vaughan	1569	William Richards	1676
Edward Young	1572	Samuel Torrent	1712
Edward Martin	—	Whiting Colton	1730
William Burton	1591	Hon. James Yorke	1756
John Denison	1602	William Talbot	1768
Samuel Radcliffe	1614	Hon. W. B. Cadogan	1775
Hugh Dica	1616	Joseph Eyre	1797
William Wild	1642	Hen. Rob. Dukinfield	1816

Very few of the above attained any extended celebrity, their reputation being for the most part confined within the sphere of their active duties. Wm. Burton (1591) who was a native of Winchester, and minister of a church in Bristol, before he had the vicarage of St. Giles, was the author of some Sermons, and of an Exposition of the Lord's Prayer, published in 1594.

William, or George, Wild obtained the vicarage of St. Giles, through the patronage of Archbishop Laud, to whom he was chaplain. He was appointed to preach before the King and Court, at Oxford, during the civil wars; and the degree of D.C.L. was the reward of his labours there. In 1648 he was deprived of his fellowship by the parliamentary visitors, when he repaired to London, and kept up a religious meeting for the royalists, in Fleet-street. At the restoration he was promoted to the see of Londonderry, where his piety, his virtues, and his public spirit,

gained for him the approbation of all men who were fortunate enough to become acquainted with him. He died at Dublin, in 1665; and his remains are deposited in the cathedral there. His literary productions are "The Hospital of Lovers," a comedy, acted in the presence of their majesties, at Oxford, but never printed; a Latin comedy, entitled, "Hermoplus," never printed; and various Sermons and Pamphlets.

William Jemmatt, was a native of this town, and was educated in Reading school; before he took the covenant, and was appointed vicar of St. Giles, he had been a preacher at Lechlade, in Gloucestershire; minister of Nettlested, in Kent; a licensed lecturer at Isleworth, in Middlesex, during fourteen years; and chaplain to the Earl of Northumberland. He died, at an advanced age, on the 26th of January, 1677, and was buried in the chancel of St. Giles on the 31st of the same month; to which church he bequeathed a valuable legacy of books. His works are "Sermons; London, 1623." "An Abridgement of Dr. J. Preston's Works; London, 1648 and 1658." "An Exposition of the Historical Prophecy of Jonah; London, 1666." "Now and Ever;" the same year. He also edited: Thomas Taylor's Five Sermons on occasion of the Gunpowder Plot, and edited and corrected three other works by the same author, (who was brother to Theophilus Taylor, vicar of St. Lawrence) entitled, "Plain and Pithy Exposition of the Twelfth Chapter of St. John's Revelation," "Christ Revealed," and "A Commentary on the Epistle of Paul to Titus;" to all of which he prefixed introductory epistles. His remaining productions were a translation into Latin, not completed, of Dr. Thomas Goodwin's Works; and some sermons. Mr. Coates notices another work of Thomas Taylor, (who was surnamed *the illuminated Doctor*) which, he says, has escaped the notice of the industrious Wood; the title page is a treatise *per se*; it runs thus:—"The Parable of the Sower and the Seed; declaring in four several grounds, among other things: 1, how far a hypocrite may go in the way towards heaven, and wherein the sound christian goeth beyond

him: and 2, in the last and best ground, largely discourseth of a good heart, describing it by very many signs of it, digested into a familiar method: which of itself is an entire treatise; and also, 3, from the constant fruit of the good ground, justifieth the doctrine of the perseverance of saints, oppugneth the fifth article of the late Arminians, and shortly and plainly answereth their most colourable arguments and evasions. By Thomas Taylor, late Fellow of Christ's College, in Cambridge, and preacher of the Word of God, at Reading, in Barkshire; &c." We copy part of the dedication to the Mayor (W. Bateman,) Corporation, and some of the author's private friends, as incidentally belonging to the history of our town, from the mention which it makes of two facts that equally apply to it now, viz: the abundant means of religious knowledge afforded to the inhabitants, and that happy sign of the faithfulness of the stewards of God, appointed to administer it, exemplified in the attendance on public worship, which perhaps distinguishes Reading above every other town in the kingdom. "Many things I might here move in, but I spare both you and myself, seeing I can weekly speak unto you. Only now I will turn precepts into prayers, that as the dew from Hermon and Mount Sion did distill on the valleys round about them, so may this town, by your prudent government, be a pattern of piety, charity, and sobriety, to the whole country about you. And as this famous town, for pleasant situation, and rich commodities, for prudent government, and civil state, but especially for the plentiful means of knowledge and grace, is as a light set up in a candlestick, as a tower on the top of a hill, and a beacon to the whole country, so your godly care may be so much the more to walk worthy your great privileges, &c. I praise God to see the house of God so frequented, and yourselves can confess, how God hath been a good pay-master already for some good affections this way, in much increase added of late years to the outward estate both of your public corporation, and many private persons. And to whom should I rather dedicate this labour, than to you who heard it preached with much gladness?"

William Bromley Cadogan, second son of Lord Cadogan, was born in London, A.D. 1751; at the age of six years he was placed at Westminster school, in which he rose to be head boy, and went from thence, in 1769, to Christ Church, Oxford, where he was distinguished for his assiduity and application; and where, according to his biographer, Mr. Cecil, his religious impressions became more deep and lasting. In the year 1774, before he was ordained, he was presented to the living of St. Giles, by Lord Chancellor Bathurst, the Rev. Mr. Helward doing the duty under the sequestration occasioned by Mr. Cadogan's minority; and in 1775, he was appointed rector of St. Luke's, Chelsea; a living in the gift of his own family, by a marriage of one of its members with the daughter of Sir Hans Sloane. He devoted, however, the greater portion of his time to the duties of his ministry in this town. He preached twice every Sunday, and once in the evenings of Tuesdays and Thursdays; the remainder of the week he employed, the mornings in studying the scriptures in the original languages, and the afternoons in visiting the sick and poor; and so regularly did he follow this course, that, in the words of a friend, "the path you found him in to day, you might be sure of meeting him in to-morrow." He founded four Sunday schools, in which upwards of 120 poor children were instructed, to whose improvement he attended with unremitting attention, and whose progress he often liberally rewarded. He died, almost suddenly, and to the inexpressible grief of his numerous flock, on the 18th of January, 1797, aged 46; and his character though best read in his works, is not unfaithfully depicted in his epitaph. "Animated by the noblest ambition, rank, talents, and every other distinction, he counted but loss, that he might bear the exalted character of minister of the gospel of Christ: this adorable name, his theme, his refuge, and his joy, which gave energy to his principles, and success to his labours, in his last moments, when every earthly consolation vanished, sustained his soul and bore him through temptation."

TRINITY CHURCH.

In consequence of the very great increase of late years in the buildings and population of that part of the parish of St. Mary, now occupied by Russell-street, Sydney-terrace, and places adjacent, it became expedient to build an additional place of worship, for the better accommodation of the inhabitants. At a meeting held in the vestry of the parish church, to adopt measures for effecting the object of relieving the evil of St. Mary's inability to accommodate its increasing congregation, it was first proposed to erect a chapel of ease; which proposition being negatived, it was suggested that a convenient church should be raised by subscription, and that the shareholders might receive the interest of their money out of the profits expected to be realised by the letting of seats; this suggestion, however, was also rejected, and several others of a different nature, experienced the same fate. It was reported in the town, about this time, that the Reverend George Hulme intended to build a chapel at his own expense, a report which, we believe, was entirely destitute of foundation, but which that gentleman confirmed in the most handsome and liberal manner, when he saw the necessity of the inhabitants and the utility of administering to it. The first estimate, sent in by Mr. Billing, named the cost of building at £6000; a subsequent estimate, made out by Mr. Cooper, did not exceed £4000; the latter was, in consequence, selected as the builder. The architect first appointed was Mr. Garbett, but the edifice was completed under the superintendence of Mr. Finlayson, at a cost exceeding the estimate, and which amounted to nearly £5000; the whole of which, except a very trifling grant contributed by government, was defrayed by the exemplary minister, who we hope may long continue to perform the duties of his own church, which will always be considered, particularly by his grateful and attached flock, as a speaking monument of its founder's benevolence.

Trinity Church is erected on the north side of the road to Oxford, immediately facing Russell-street; the

architecture is in the plainest Gothic style ; the entrance is by three pointed arches, divided by graduated buttresses, and surmounted by a low tower unpicturesque in itself, and rendered still more so by its situation : there are eight lancet windows on each side, and the interior, which will accommodate nearly twelve hundred persons, is very judiciously and conveniently laid out ; it possesses a very superior organ, built by Flight and Robson, and a school room has been added within these two years, for the instruction of Sunday scholars, where two hundred boys and girls are religiously educated. The church was opened by license from the Bishop of Salisbury on the 19th of November, 1826, but was not consecrated till the 20th of August, 1832, on which day, Dr. Burgess the diocesan, in presence of a large and gratified assembly of members of the established church, performed the solemn office of consecration. The right of presentation rests with Mr. Hulme, and is vested in him and his heirs, for the space of sixty years from the period of its being consecrated by the bishop, after which time it lapses to the incumbent of the parish of St. Mary.

The rite of consecration is of very ancient origin, and is the act of devoting any thing to the service and worship of God ; the Hebrews, who sometimes consecrated their fields and cattle to the Lord, surrendered all further property in such possessions as soon as the ceremony was concluded : the sanctification to God, of the first born of men and beasts, according to the Mosaical law, and the devoting of the Gibeonites, by Joshua ; and of the Nethinims, by Solomon and David, to the service of the temple, are instances of the antiquity of the rite which do not require further illustration. The consecration of christian churches, in the fourth century, (before which period it is uncertain in what manner the dedication was performed) was attended with great solemnity : the symbol of salvation was elevated, an altar erected, a sermon preached in praise and commemoration of the founder, and prayers, composed for the occasion, offered up to beseech the blessing of God on the new edifice, and upon all who should, thenceforward, enter it.

Churches have been always consecrated, in England, with particular ceremonies, the form of which is said to be left to the discretion of the bishop. At the consecration of Trinity, the venerable diocesan was met at the entrance of the church by the members of the corporation, and some of the principal inhabitants of the town, who delivered to him the petition, praying that he would consecrate the chapel, which was read by the registrar; after which the bishop and his chaplains, with the preacher, officiating minister, and a large body of the clergy, walked up the middle aisle to the communion table, repeating the 24th psalm as they proceeded; the bishop reading one verse alone, and the clergy repeating the one which followed. The bishop being seated, the conveyance of the site of the new building, and other documents relating thereto, were presented to him, which he deposited upon the communion table, while he prayed that the Almighty would favourably approve of the solemn dedication of the place to the performance of the several offices of religious worship;* and give steadfastness of faith, seriousness of affection and devotion of mind to all who should enter therein, to give Him praise and confess their own sins; that grace and heavenly benediction might rest on those who should receive there the sacrament of the body and blood of Christ; and that the preaching of the gospel might enable its hearers to perceive what they ought to do, and give them strength to achieve it. The sentence of consecration was then read by the chancellor, and signed by the bishop, who ordered it to be registered, and laid upon the communion table; after which, some additional prayers, and a sermon concluded the ceremony. It should be understood, that it is not the mere rite of consecration that renders a place sacred, it becomes so from the moment it is devoted by the owner to sacred purposes, and to no other; the ceremony is only performed in order, that by legally and solemnly declaring it to be so, the sa-

* The baptismal and marriage ceremonies cannot be performed in this church.

craments and some other offices of the church might be administered therein, which previously could not be done: it is South, we believe, who says, that "the gift of the proprietor to God makes it God's, and consequently sacred."

DISSENTING ESTABLISHMENTS.

CASTLE-STREET CHAPEL.—The REVEREND JAMES SHERMAN.—This Chapel is built on the site of the old county gaol for felons and debtors;* and it is the opinion of some that the site of the old gaol had been formerly occupied by a religious house, and previously to that, by the Castle; but there are no records of the county remaining, in support of the latter opinion, or which give any information concerning the date of the erection of the old prison. On pulling down part of the building, in 1798, a small lancet window was discovered, next the street; and a round arch on the east side, which was supposed to be the entrance to a chapel for the use of the prisoners; and from these remains the building was thought to be of some antiquity. The present chapel was opened in 1799, under the toleration act, though the worshippers there do not call themselves dissenters; and it is indebted for its foundation and support, to the voluntary contributions of a body of persons who seceded from the congregation of St. Giles' Church, shortly after the death of the Hon. and Rev. W. B. Cadogan, in consequence of a dispute with that gentleman's successor, who was accused of not preaching the same doctrine they had been accustomed to hear. The congregation is very numerous and respectable, and its religious creed nearly similar to that of the established church, whose

* Before the removal of the county gaol from Castle-street, the following inscription, composed by Mr. Merrick, was placed over the debtor's grate, next the street.

" Oh ye, whose hours exempt from sorrow flow,
Behold the seat of pain, of want, and woe:
Think, while your hands th' intreated alms extend,
That what to us you give, to God ye lend."

Mturgy, and other offices appointed in the common prayer, are constantly used; their (we believe) only point of difference with the national establishment consists in professing a stricter conformity to the tenets of the early reformers than that observed by our regular clergy. The society did not, at first, support a constant preacher, but was occasionally supplied with one from other congregations, and principally from those in Lady Huntingdon's connexion. The building, which is simple and commodious, was erected from a plan designed by Mr. Billing; and the interior, during winter, is very well lighted with gas.

BAPTIST MEETING HOUSES.—There are three chapels in Reading, attended by respectable congregations of this class of protestant dissenters. That in Hosier's-street, at present under the ministerial superintendence of the Rev. J. H. Hinton, M. A. was established in 1655, at which time it was endowed with the annual sum of five pounds sterling, charged upon a house in Abingdon, the gift of William Butler, of that town, and an annual rent charge of twenty-five shillings, from a meadow in Wokingham, was subsequently given by Mr. Griffin Griffin.* This chapel was much enlarged, and rendered more convenient for the members of the baptist society who attended it, some years ago; but a new one is now erecting upon some ground, purchased for that purpose, and which formed part of the Ort estate, sold by the crown in 1832. The other meeting houses, are in Silver-street, and Minster-street,† but they do not demand any particular notice, as their congregations are of the same

* Mr. John Stamp, of Sinsham, near Reading, who died about 1720, gave his estate at Hethselton, near Stoke, in Dorsetshire, "by will, to John House, Joseph Frome, and John Spillett, citizens and merchants of London, for the better maintenance of the dissenting ministers of Wareham, Weymouth, and Reading, to each £25 per annum; the remainder to such, in and about London, who had not £40 per annum." But this will was annulled by a decree in Chancery, on account of a clause, by which the widow was obliged to sue for the thirds of her husband's estate.—*Hutchin's Dorset*: Coates citante.

† The meeting in Minster-street, called *Salem Chapel*, is under the ministry of the Rev. Samuel Hewlett.

class of baptists, *particular*; the *general*, or Arminian baptists, whose numbers throughout England, are very small when compared with the *particular* or Calvinistic baptists, have no place of worship in this town; indeed, the former are usually found existing only as small sects in large manufacturing districts, and as they entertain a thorough contempt for all erudition and science, so are their leaders destitute of that safe learning and knowledge which point out to salvation. The *particular* baptists observe in their congregation the same rules of government, and the same forms of worship, as those followed by the presbyterians; and their community is under the direction of men eminent for their piety and learning. They maintain that baptism should be administered, as it actually is in the Russian and Greek churches, by immersion, and not by sprinkling; they refuse the ordinance altogether to children, nor do they admit adults generally, but only those of a certain character and description, whom they profess to render fit for the sacrament, by previous instruction. On their first appearance in this country, they were received with great distrust and alarm, being considered not only as successors but as adopters of the opinions of that fanatic and sanguinary sect, who, in the sixteenth century, deluged part of Europe in blood, under the pretext of Christ being sole king upon earth, and the consequent non-effect of all social laws, which they not only trampled upon, but erected a new Jerusalem in Holland, and placed a tailor at its head as the supreme sovereign of its destinies. But, previous to their rise, in this country, Menno had reformed the abuses of the old Anabaptists, swept away their gross indecencies, and tamed their heartless ferocity, so that even the early English baptists must not be confounded with the monstrous society which convulsed all Germany and Holland; many, indeed, suffered at the stake in Smithfield, but the flames there were as often kindled to smother virtue, as to consume vice. Their confession of faith, published in 1643, procured them a greater share of public and general respect than they had been, hitherto, accustomed to

receive; and, it appears from it that their religious sentiments are the same at this day; that they were then. The burial ground of the society in this town is situated in Church-street, and was, with a house adjacent, the gift of Mr. William Butler, and Mr. Robert Willis, of Reading.*

THE INDEPENDENT MEETING.—The Rev. A. DOUGLAS, and the Rev. W. LEGGE, B. A.—This chapel, which is situated in Broad-street, was built by subscription, and has been enlarged, since its erection, and a burial ground added, at a considerable expence, but which was defrayed by the contributions raised voluntarily among the more wealthy part of the congregation. In size, and in its conveniences for affording accommodation to a very numerous and respectable audience, it is well adapted to all its purposes.

The Independents are a purely English class of dissenters, who are so named from their maintaining that each congregation of christians, which assembles for the purpose of public worship, in one house, is in itself a complete church, possessing every sufficient power for all acts of religious government, and in no respect subject to, but entirely independent of all other churches. They arose in England, during the reign of Elizabeth, about the year 1581, under the auspices of Robert Brown, a puritan, who, in common with a very large proportion of his fellow subjects, was offended with the many particulars retained by that queen, in the church of England, too nearly resembling those of the church of Rome. The societies founded by Mr. Brown, he pronounced *independent*, by divine right, and exempt from episcopal jurisdiction. He also maintained that every member had an

* The following is a list of the various sects of baptists existing at the present period: Menonites; Refined Anabaptists, Flemings, or Flandrians; Gross Anabaptists or Waterlandians; Groningenists; Ukewallists; Galenists; Apostoolians; and Dantzickers or Prussians:—a Freemason, in Spain, is not so odious a character in the sight of the government, as a baptist in Prussia, where the body is considered much more as a political than a religious one.

equal share in the government of the congregation to which he belonged, and he extended the right of preaching, not merely to the pastors, but to any individual member who thought proper to rise and expound the scriptures to his brethren. The Brownists propagated their notions with infinite zeal, and libelled the church with unwearied assiduity, till their own violence drove them into exile, which being a fate of which their founder was unambitious, and unwilling to endure, he very consistently renounced his principles of separation, took orders in that church he had pronounced spurious and papistical, and obtained, in course of time, a benefice. After the secession of Robert Brown, the society was renovated, and the severity of its original plans mitigated by the pious and learned John Robinson, who taught them not to pour forth uncharitable invectives against all churches which were governed by rules entirely different from their own; he also, introduced a more regular ministry into their communities, and instead of allowing promiscuously all ranks and orders of men to teach in public, he gave the right of electing ministers, to the congregations where they were fixed, a rule still followed by the independents, who will not permit any member to speak in public, before his capacity and talents have been subjected to a suitable examination, and have received the approbation of the heads of the congregation. They reject the use of all creeds and confessions drawn up by fallible men, and require from their teachers no other test of orthodoxy than a declaration of their belief in the gospel of Jesus, and their adherence to the scriptures as the sole standard of their faith and practice; but it must not be rashly concluded that because they reject the use of all creeds of human composition, they consequently doubt or disbelieve the doctrines deemed orthodox in other churches, for the contrary is the fact. To the rite of ordination, they attribute no virtue whatever; the qualifications which they require in a regular minister of the New Testament, we have partly enumerated; they demand, in addition, principles of sincere and unaffected piety, a com-

petent stock of knowledge, and, ordinarily, an invitation to the pastoral office from some particular society. A man who unites these qualities within himself, they deem a suitable instructor for the less gifted; and they believe that the imposition of hands of bishops or presbyters would convey to him no power or prerogative, which he did not previously possess; every kind of ministerial ordination they are consequently opposed to, and they maintain that he who has not the qualifications above mentioned, has not God's call, nor any authority to preach the gospel of Christ, or to dispense the ordinances of his religion. The members of this society are very numerous, and they have produced from among them, divines eminent for sound learning, unaffected piety, and exalted virtue.

THE WESLEYAN METHODIST CHAPEL is situate in Church-street, and is under the pastoral direction of the Rev. THOMAS ROWE, and the Rev. HENRY GROVES. The opinions of the Methodists are too well known to require particular notice here; they profess, and indeed observe, a regard for the established church, and maintain the possibility of attaining sinless perfection in the present state. The difference between the Wesleyans and the Whitfieldites, consists in the theological system of Mr. Wesley and his followers being Arminian, while that of Mr. Whitfield and *his* disciples, is Calvinistic.

In addition to the dissenting establishments we have already named, the followers of Mr. Cudworth, the hero of corpuscular philosophy, have a place of assembly in London-street; and the society of Friends have also a meeting house, with a burial ground annexed, situated in Church-street, which they hold under a lease from the corporation, for ninety-nine years. Their tenets are too commonly known to require an extended notice: they object to hired preachers, as they deem such to be acting in disobedience to Christ's command, "Freely ye have received, freely give;" and they allow females, as well as males, who are endued with a right qualification for the ministry, to exercise their gifts for the general

edification of the church; they also acknowledge the divinity of Christ, but deny the efficacy of the two sacraments of baptism and the Lord's supper. The Catholic chapel in Vastern-lane, was erected by some pious French emigrants; the duties of its ministry is at present performed by the Rev. Mr. Bowland.

It will be seen from the above brief notice of the various places appropriated to divine worship in this town, that there are not less than thirteen; viz:—the three parish churches, the auxiliary church of the Holy Trinity, one or more for the respective sects of dissenters, and a chapel for the use of the Roman Catholics; the whole combined forming a means of religious instruction that, taking into consideration the population of the place, cannot be surpassed by any town in the empire.

THE SCHOOLS.

THE FREE SCHOOL.—There formerly stood, near the church of St. Lawrence, an alms-house, dedicated to St. John, and founded by one of the abbots of Reading, for the maintenance of such decayed widows of persons who had borne some office in the town, who would consent to take the veil, and make a vow of living unmarried during the remainder of their lives. Their office consisted in praying for the good estate of their sovereign, and for the souls of the founder and of the benefactors to the foundation; in return for which, they received their provisions from the abbey, daily; and money and clothing, every year. The revenues of this hospital were suppressed by abbot Thorne, in 1445, and applied to the use of the almoner of the abbey; this appropriation of the funds of a religious house was disapproved of by Henry VII, who ordered them to be again applied to some charitable establishment; at the suggestion of the abbot, the king consented to the founding of a grammar school, for the endowment of which he allotted the annual stipend of ten pounds, payable out of the crown rents of the town of Reading: an additional sum of two hundred marks, was contributed towards

the advancement of the foundation by a William Deua, who had formerly borne some office in the abbey; an act of generosity which was rewarded by a laudatory notice in that gentleman's epitaph. How this money was applied we have no means of ascertaining; the stipend of ten pounds continued to be paid to the master by the abbot until the dissolution, when it was charged upon the manor of Cholsey, by Henry VIII. In the reign of Queen Elizabeth, the corporation undertook the remuneration of the head of the school, in return for certain lands surrendered to them by the crown; and in addition to their office of furnishing, thenceforward, the master's salary, they were empowered, by charter, to nominate, elect, appoint, or remove him at discretion. Archbishop Laud, in the reign of Charles I., bequeathed the farm at Bray, in this county, to the corporation, to be applied to various charitable purposes, one of the results of which legacy was the increasing the master's salary to thirty pounds a year, at the time, and a gradual advancement of the same during a subsequent period, as the land bequeathed increased in value.

The visitors of the school, as appointed by Archbishop Laud, are the Vice-Chancellor of the university of Oxford, the President of St. John's, and the Warden of All Souls, for the time being. Their office is to superintend the proper application of the Archbishop's bequests; their visit to the school is paid every third year, and the expences of their reception and entertainment defrayed by another legacy of the great benefactor to the establishment, who left twenty-four pounds for that purpose. In 1649, when Mr. S. Pocock, a person totally unqualified for the heavy duties attached to the dignity of head master, was removed from that office, it was determined by the visitors and corporation that, for the time to come, the following questions should be put to the principal at each period of the triennial visitation to the school:—

- 1st. What authors are your scholars able to give an account of in their several forms?
- 2nd. How many scholars have you in the school ripe for the university?

- 3rd. What method do you use in teaching?
 4th. What exercises do your scholars daily or weekly perform?
 5th. Do you train up your scholars in the knowledge of religion: and what course do you take for that purpose?
 6th. Do you pray with your scholars, morning and evening?
 7th. By what testimony doth it appear that you have been approved to be able, and that you are diligent in discharge of your duty?
 8th. What times of remission are usually granted your scholars, by way of recreation?
 9th. Do you diligently attend upon the public ordinances of God? do you cause your scholars to frequent the place of worship, and see that they behave themselves reverently there, during the time of all exercise of religion?

The two scholarships in St. John the Baptist's College, Oxford, belonging to this school, were founded by Sir Thomas White, in 1557; the qualifications and circumstances of eligible candidates, are best explained in the following particulars, preserved among the statutes of the College, and drawn up by Sir Thomas himself* :—

“Seeing that there is nothing in the whole society of man more divine; nothing more analagous to our nature, than to be liberal and bountiful towards those to whom we conceive ourselves to be most beholden. Neither are we tied by stricter bonds of friendship to any, more than to the citizens of London, among whom we have been, not only long conversant, and brought up also from our infancy, but also have attained and gotten the greatest part of such goods and commodities, as now, by divine permission, we enjoy. Wherefore, being moved with that love and piety,

* “The statutes of St. John's were compiled from those of New College, but are supposed to have been drawn up, at the founder's desire, by Sir William Cordell, solicitor-general to the Queen, and master of the Rolls.”—*Coutes.*

which we bear towards our fellow-citizens, we do appoint, ordain, and will, that forty-three of the poorer scholars, who, either within London or the suburbs thereof, shall bestow their time diligently in grammar, may be admitted into this our College, founded and endowed at our costs and charges, and they shall enjoy all such advantages, as the present scholars possess.

"Also, each of the following schools, viz. Coventry, Bristol, and Reading, shall send two scholars, who shall partake of the same advantages and privileges as the others enjoy. One also shall be chosen out of Tunbridge school, in the county of Kent.

"And now, to the end that there may be some certainty appointed, concerning the nominating and electing of these seven scholars, whom we will have equal to the others, in all the advantages and privileges of the College.

"As often as any place of these seven shall become void, we will, that within forty days after such vacancy, that the president and fellows shall certify and advise, by letters signed with their own hands, the mayor and aldermen of those places, out of which such scholars are to be named and chosen, that is to say, Coventry, Bristol, Reading, and Tunbridge, out of which two scholars each are to be elected, except out of Tunbridge, from which, out of respect to the great love we bore to Sir Andrew Judd, knt., founder of the grammar school there, we do ordain and will, that one scholar shall be nominated and elected, as often as the place assigned for this school shall be void. And they shall take care to send such out of their schools to the College, as either they themselves shall know, or in the judgment of others, shall believe to be fit to learn logic. And we do decree, ordain, and will, that this nomination, assignation, evocation, and election of forty-three scholars, and six choristers, by the worshipful men, the master, wardens, and assistants, and the president, and vice-president, and two of the chief senior fellows; and also, the nomination, evocation, and election of those seven scholars, by the mayors and aldermen of those places, of which

we made mention before, he made and kept for ever; neither shall it be lawful at any time, for the president and fellows which now are; or for their successors, to invert, change, break, or weaken the form of electing scholars, which we have prescribed, nor to expound, nor interpret otherwise than the true, natural, and grammatical sense of the words do bear, under pain of expulsion out of the College; neither shall they at any time consent, either in word or deed, to them that do otherwise."

A dispute arose, at a subsequent period, upon two points connected with the statute we have just cited, which involved the general interests of all the inhabitants; these were, first, the right of the burgesses to vote; and, secondly, whether a boy who had been educated as a boarder in the school, and who was not a native of the town, was eligible to the scholarship. The case laid before counsel, in order to obtain a legal opinion upon the subject, after noticing the foundation of the grammar school, in the reign of Henry VII., and various charters granted to the town by succeeding sovereigns, concludes thus:—"You are particularly requested to peruse Sir Thomas White's statutes, and advise whether or not the right of election is in the mayor solely; in the mayor and aldermen; or in the corporation at large; and Reading school being in a very flourishing way, and chiefly consisting of boarders, gentlemen's sons in the country, and but a few boys of the town, you are desired to advise whether or not the corporation can, consistent with their trust, elect a scholar out of the school at large, which some are desirous of doing, thinking it for the benefit of the town and school so to do; the town, on the other hand, insisting that it cannot be done where there is a town's boy in the school qualified, though in a lower class; as the corporation wish to do what is strictly just, your opinion is desired fully."

The reply of Mr. Dampier, the counsel consulted on this occasion, was, as it appears to us, very properly in favour of the scholars on the foundation, provided they were suitably qualified in other respects.

According to Sir Thomas White's directions, to the exclusion of the boarders; the learned gentleman being of opinion that the free scholars only were eligible, because they were the objects of the bounty of the foundation of the school, and that the same class must be understood as forming the object of the bounty of him who founded the scholarships. As to the question concerning who was possessed of the right of voting, Mr. Dampier thought, from the confused meaning of Sir Thomas White's words, that it was a very difficult one to answer. The body of freemen, at large, it was clear, possessed no right whatever; and he was of opinion that the mayor alone might, at first, have claimed the privilege of nomination, notwithstanding the words of the statute are in the plural number, as Sir Thomas White is speaking of three, if not four corporations; on the question between the aldermen and burgesses, after acknowledging the difficulty of coming to a decision, he declared against the latter, and we think very unjustly, for they possessed the right of voting before the borough enjoyed the advantage of aldermen. Mr. Man's remarks are so pertinent and sensible on this decision, that we shall add nothing of our own to them; he says, "At the time this statute was made, this corporation consisted only of the mayor and burgesses; if, therefore, the burgesses had a right to vote at the election of a scholar on its first institution, they being then the *seniores* of the borough, their subsequent division into primary and secondary burgesses, and after that into aldermen and assistant burgesses, could not deprive the latter of the right of voting, which they before possessed; so that notwithstanding such great stress is laid on the word *seniores*, it is evident that the founder meant by that general term, to include all the members of the corporation, of whom the burgesses are an essential part, as without their consent, no act of the corporation can be valid."

In consequence of the opinion of Mr. Dampier, however, the burgesses were not allowed to vote, the question of their right of so doing being negatived by the aldermen themselves; a proceeding sanctioned

neither by justice nor custom; two cases have been cited from the corporation journals to prove that this decision was opposed both to the spirit of the statute and to previous habitual practice, and it will be very apparent, from a perusal of them, that both cases clearly meet their object.

"Letters from St. John's College being read, January 11, 1631, for the electing a scholar from the free school: this was the manner of proceeding in the election, viz:—*Mr. Doctor Bird*, being schoolmaster, was called in and acquainted with the letters from the College, and required to name three of the most fit scholars, whereof one of them may be chosen, and sent with a certificate to the College; and he named three, and affirmed that every one of them was fit. There were present at this meeting, nine capital, and sixteen secondary burgesses; and the mayor and burgesses elected *Mr. Creed*, the son of *John Creed*, aged sixteen years."

Of these votes the successful candidate obtained twenty, only five being given to the other two, and as the corporate body did not exceed, in number, twenty-five persons, it is evident, that, on this occasion, the burgesses must have voted also. The second case occurred on the 3rd of May, 1700; when the mayor "communicated to the aldermen and burgesses, a letter which he had received from the president and fellows of St. John the Baptist's College, signifying that the two fellowships, belonging to this borough, will be both void at Midsummer, at which time they desire them to send two young men, chosen by themselves, into those places, qualified both for learning and manners." At this election, there were present eleven aldermen and five burgesses, and the number of suffrages for the two scholarships amounting to thirty-two, it is again manifest, that the burgesses exercised at this period what had hitherto been their undisputed privilege, and though in some later instances this does not appear to have been the case, these ought to be considered rather as violations of their original right of voting, than a confirmation of a late decision of the aldermen in their own favour.

In the list of scholars of St. John's elected from Reading school, as given by Coates, two are noticed as having been rejected by the president and fellows of the college; one in 1661, named Richard King, the cause of whose rejection was satisfactory enough, he had not conformed to the ancient statutes of the college, which required every scholar to be above fourteen, and not to exceed nineteen years of age, and he was accordingly sent back "as one of tender years;" but the rejection of Thomas Poke, who was elected in 1677, was one of the most flagrant acts of injustice that was ever committed; Poke was sent to St. John's in conjunction with Francis Bernard, who was recommended by Bishop Mews; the latter was accepted, but his unfortunate companion was rejected by the college, though in every way qualified by his attainments to enjoy the bounty of Sir Thomas White, who had bequeathed it for precisely such objects as Poke, because he *had been employed in trade*, having occasionally assisted his father in his business, as a tailor, which he exercised in this town, a cause of rejection which was at once an honour to the humble and unlucky scholar, and a disgrace to the college who alleged such a reason, as well as to the corporation who submitted to so tyrannous an act of cruel injustice.

The list of scholars, however, taken generally, is the proudest trophy the school can point to, in evidence of the superior merits of an establishment in which the pupils elected to Oxford have almost invariably reflected great credit; the majority rose to high and honourable dignities in the church, or achieved celebrity in other learned professions; two in the list were confessedly not natives of the town, and, as such, were not eligible to the scholarships. Tertullian Pine, who was elected in 1573, was born in Devonshire. He took the degree of Bachelor in Arts in 1577; and was subsequently created Doctor of Laws in the university of Basle, during his travels in Switzerland; and, on his return to England, was installed Archdeacon of Sudbury, in the diocese of Norwich, July 20, 1591, in the place of Dr. John Still, of Cam-

bridge. The second case of a stranger being elected in preference to a native of the town, occurred in the person of Mr. Pope, in the year 1769; this case is often cited by those who are of opinion that strangers are eligible, as one which supports their argument. The circumstances attending it were these:—Mr. Davenport, jun. a native of the town, was a candidate for the vacant scholarship, his qualifications for which were undisputed; this gentleman's elder brother had been previously elected to one of the scholarships, in 1763, and it is suggested that the members of the corporation opposed the election of the younger brother from a disinclination to see both scholarships enjoyed by one family; a cause of opposition which, if true, was frivolous and unjust. By the advice of his elder brother, Mr. Davenport did not attend at the hall on the day of election, but remained satisfied that he had fulfilled every necessary proceeding by merely declaring himself a candidate. The assembled corporate body took advantage of this absence to elect their own protégé, by sending the town-sergeant to make proclamation on the top of the hall stairs, for the candidates to appear, when none but Mr. Pope answering to the summons, they affected to elect him rather as a matter of necessity than inclination. The Messrs. Davenport instituted subsequent measures to get the election set aside, but they were not attended with success, and there the dispute rested; Mr. Pope, however, was always considered as an intruder, by the collegians from Reading school, and it is very evident that his case is not at all favourable to the opinions of those who oppose the subjects of election being confined to duly qualified natives of the town.

Mr. Coates thinks that the original school-room was probably the great hall of St. John's Hospital: it contained a portrait of Henry VII., painted on pannel, and now, we believe, in the possession of the head master. The following monkish rhymes are legible beneath the portrait:—

Virginibus sedes
Fuit hæc Monialibus Ædes,
Hospitium Henricus
Musis donavit Amicus.

In 1621, the school-house was repaired, at the expence of the corporation; and in 1672, a new floor was put down between the school and the town-hall. The north end of the school was fitted up as a library, in 1740, to which a small collection of French works was contributed by Mr. Giles Bellay; in six years the number of volumes had increased only to 385 volumes, but the collection has been considerably augmented at various subsequent periods. The old school-room being found inconvenient from its situation beneath the town-hall, was abandoned, in 1790, in which year, Dr. Valpy built at his own expence, a large and commodious room for the purpose of a school, fifty-two feet in length, near the master's house. It is supposed that there was formerly no residence specially allotted for the accommodation of successive masters,* who appear to have resided in private dwellings, and not to have received boarders, till the period when the mastership of the school was possessed by Mr. Hiley, who enjoyed that dignity from 1716 to 1750; this gentleman, after living for some time in a small house on the north side of the Forbury, built an extensive mansion. for the reception of boarders, near the Vastern-lane, which, after his decease, was rented by Mr. Spicer, the succeeding master, of Dr. Addington, the late principal's son-in-law. In 1771, Mr. Spicer promoted a subscription, the object of which was to secure the house for ever, as the master's residence; and, at the annual meeting, in Reading, which took place the same year, of gentlemen educated at the school, it was unanimously agreed "to forward a subscription, in order to raise a fund towards purchasing or building a house, for the master of the free-school, for the time being, and to invest the principal in the trustees, appointed by Archbishop Laud to be visitors of the school, and the mayor of Reading, for the

* In 1541, Henry VIII., granted to Leonard Cox, by patent, "the office of master of the grammar school of the town of Reading, with a certain tenement called 'a scole-house,' and a passage belonging to it, for his life, with a stipend of ten pounds, issuing out of the manor of Cholsey, belonging to the late dissolved monastery of Reading."

time being, who were empowered to receive the interest of the said principal, so to be raised, till a house be purchased or built therewith." Mr. Spicer was himself a liberal contributor to an undertaking from which his successors were to derive more advantage than he who suggested it. The corporation of Reading, St. John's college, the county and town members, the resident gentry, and many of the old *alumni* of the school, also forwarded their contributions; but though there was a long list of subscribers, the sum subscribed was not adequate to the intended purchase; the money, therefore, was funded, and the interest of it, after Mr. Spicer's resignation, was added to the salary of the two succeeding masters. By the renewed exertions of some sincere friends to the establishment, a sufficient increase was made to the capital, in 1784, to enable the trustees to carry the original object of the subscription into effect. Dr. Addington's house was then purchased as a school-house, for the sum of £800, and was made over in trust to the mayor, and corporation, who agreed to renew the lives by the payment of the fines; the annual ground rent and land-tax being charged to the master. The house was afterwards much improved by Dr. Valpy, who added to it a spacious hall and library, with some smaller rooms.

MASTERS OF THE SCHOOL.

JOHN LONG, 1503.

The fiction of Cardinal Wolsey having been expelled Magdalen College, Oxford, for some depredations upon the College chest, and his having opened a grammar school, at Reading, has been long since exploded! though many have placed him at the head of the list of masters of the free school, from a belief in the above story, stated on the authority of Archbishop Parks, there is no doubt of Long having been the first appointed to that office.

LEONARD COX, 1529.

A native of Monmouth, and a man of considerable attainments; he took his bachelor's degree in arts, at Cambridge, and was incorporated into the same degree, at Oxford, in 1529; he was the author of "the art or craft of Rhetorike," which was published in 1532, and inscribed to "his singular good lorde,

the lorde Hugh Faryngton, abbott of Redynge," for whom he desires "long and prosperous life, with increase of honour;" a wish that fell most lamentably short of fulfilment, for his patron was hanged, a very few years after. The dedication of this scarce book, however, is strongly marked by the sentiments of a pious and amiable man, whose humanity is also celebrated for having saved from the stocks a poor persecuted Lutheran, out of regard to his literary knowledge; but the good wishes of the worthy master were as unfortunate in his character of patron, as in that of "client and perpetuall servant," for John Fryth, the object of his humane interference, was only saved from the stocks to die at the stake. He travelled over the Continent, and supported himself, as it was common for great scholars to do, at that period, by teaching the learned languages; Bale speaks of him as being instructed in all the liberal arts; a grammarian, a rhetorician, and a poet; a sound divine, and a diligent preacher of God's word; he was the friend of Erasmus and Melancthon, and survived until the reign of Edward VI. His works, in addition to the one already mentioned, are,—*"Commentaries on William Lilly's construction of the eight parts of speech."* *"Marcus Eremita de lege et spiritu,"* translated from the Greek into Latin; and *"The Paraphrase of St. Paul's Epistle to Titus,"* translated into English. from the Latin of Erasmus.

LEONARD BILSON, 1546,

noticed by Wood as "the learned schoolmaster of Reading." In succession to him, Coates says, "one Hampton was schoolmaster for a short interval; to whom succeeded Thomas Thackham, for the first time. John Moore, vicar of St. Giles's, in 1557, had the patent in the beginning of Queen Mary's reign, from whom it came to Julines Palmer."

JULINES PALMER, 1555,

or Julius Palmer, as he is called by Mr. Man, who places him as immediate successor to Bilson, in 1554, was the son of a respectable tradesman at Coventry, and received his education at Magdalen College, Oxford, where he was much esteemed both for his learning and the simplicity and gentleness of his manners; being, however, a zealous Roman Catholic, and refusing to conform to the new doctrines in the reign of Edward VI., and lying also under the suspicion of being the author of several libels and satirical verses, reflecting on the president, Dr. Haddon, a great friend to the reformation, he was expelled from the College. He was then engaged as a tutor in the family of Sir Edward Knollys, and when Queen Mary's visitors were sent to Oxford, in 1553, under the title of reformers, he made a successful application to be restored to the College honours, of which he had been deprived; and, it is supposed,

from the notice taken by Fox of his frequent journeys to Oxford, that he held his fellowship while he was master of Reading school. During the period that he was a warm advocate and follower of the Roman Catholic faith, he had been often heard to declare of the Lutherans that "none of them would stand to death for their religion;" but since the uttering of this assertion, he had himself witnessed the execution of Ridley and Latimer, whose piety and firmness effected a great change in his mind; which was completed by a careful study of the works of Peter Martyr, and an anxious perusal of the holy scriptures. From the violent exclamations he made against the tyrannous cruelty of those who persecuted the professors of the reformed religion, he fell under suspicion himself of being a favourer, if not a convert, of the new and pernicious heresy; his mode of faith, however, did not leave him open to accusation, for he only condemned the persecution, without openly acknowledging the justice of their cause who fell victims to it; but his private sentiments were at length discovered through the treachery of some false friends, who not only, by a feigned sympathy for the martyrs of christianity, drew from him his most secret thoughts, but took the opportunity of his absence, to rifle his study and seize his papers; among these were found a few manuscripts composed in opposition to the proceedings of the council, which they threatened to produce against him, unless he consented to retire from Reading, and resign the mastership of the school to a person of their appointment, who is said, by Stripe, to have been Thomas Thackham. He accepted the alternative, and quitted the town, leaving some property in the possession of his enemies, and a quarter's stipend which was due to him, and proceeded to his mother's residence. at Evesham, in Worcestershire, where he hoped to receive a legacy that had been bequeathed to him by his father; his mother, however, receiving him with bitter reproaches for the change in his religious sentiments, he quickly withdrew, and returned privately to Magdalen College, where through the interest of his friends, Mr. Allan Cope, and president Cole, he received an appointment to the mastership of a school in Gloucestershire. He had not proceeded far on his way to the spot whither his new duties called him, when he took the hasty, and, to him, fatal resolution of returning to Reading, in order, if possible, to obtain the arrear of salary due to him, and to recover also the property he had left there, previous to his resignation of the school. His arrival here, at an inn, called the *Cardinal's Hat*, was no sooner discovered, through the agency of some of his former friends, than he was seized, without himself having the least suspicion of his danger, and thrown into a dungeon, where he was exposed to the most merciless treatment; at the end of ten days, he was taken before the Mayor, and made acquainted with the charges intended to be brought against him: among other alleged crimes,

He was accused of saying that the queen's sword was not entrusted to her that she might practise tyranny, and slay the true servants of God; of being a sower of sedition, and a procurer of unlawful assemblies, because he had not quelled a riot among some persons who attended to hear his lectures; he was moreover, charged with conspiring against the life of the husband of his landlady, who is said to have requested him to return to Reading, "and sent her commendations by the token, that the *knife lay hid under the beam*," whence it was inferred that assassination was contemplated. Three suborned witnesses having sworn to the truth of these charges, Mr. Palmer was sent to the cage, which then stood over the entrance to the church-yard of St. Lawrence's parish, that he might become a spectacle of contempt to the people, who were told that he was thus punished for the most enormous crimes and misdemeanours, which had been fully proved against him. To one of the people, a certain John Galant who rebuked him for having deceived men's expectations, and told him that he was suffering for his crimes, and not for righteousness' sake, he replied: "oh, brother Galant! these be the old practices of that fanatical brood; but be well assured, and God be praised for it, I have so purged myself, and detected their falsehoods, that from henceforth I shall be no more molested therewith." The latter assertion was made on the just but ill founded hope that the proofs he had produced of his entire innocence of the charges brought against him, and the inclination of the mayor to discharge him from custody, would have been followed by the regaining of his freedom; but his enemies, in the mean time, were not idle; for finding that their attempts against him had not been attended with the results they hoped for, they determined at once to accuse him of heresy; on this new charge he was committed by Mr. Bird, the Bishop of Salisbury's official, and the mayor, to Newbury; and on Thursday, July 16, he appeared at the visitation held in the church there, by Dr. Jeffery, Sir Richard Abbridges, sheriff of the county, Sir William Ramsford, John Winchcomb, Esq. and Clement Burdett, the minister of Englefield.

Dr. Jeffery, after some altercation with Palmer, concerning the authorship of a pamphlet then recently published, thus addressed him: "Mr. Palmer, we have received certain writings and articles against you, from the right worshipful the mayor of Reading, and other justices, whereby we understand, that being brought before them, you were convicted of certain heresies.

"1st. That you deny the supremacy of the Pope's holiness.

"2nd. That you affirm there are but two sacraments.

"3rd. You say that the priest showeth up an idol at mass, and therefore you went to no mass since your first coming to Reading.

"4th. You hold that there is no purgatory.

"5th. You are charged with sowing sedition, and seeking to divide the unity of the Queen's subjects."

Several books and pamphlets were brought forward, in support of these charges, the authorship of which Mr. Palmer readily acknowledged; denying, at the same time, that they contained any thing contrary to the word of God. Dr. Jeffery denounced the answer as malevolent, adding "that he was very wicked in slandering the dead; and railing at a catholic and learned man living."

"If it be a slander," said the accused, "he slandered himself, for I do but report his own writings, and expose absurdities therein contained; and I esteem it not railing, to inveigh against Annas and Caiaphas, being dead."

The doctor, incensed at the reply, assured him that he would take such measures as should compel him to recant his damnable errors and heresies; but Palmer told him, that although of himself, he could do nothing; yet, if he and all his enemies, both bodily and ghostly, should exert their efforts, they would not be able to effect what they desired, neither could they prevail against the mighty powers of divine grace, by which he understood the truth, and was determined to speak it boldly.

Clement Burdet, the minister of Englefield then addressed Palmer, and pointing to the pix over the altar, said, "What seest thou there?" "I see," answered the victim, "a canopy of silk, embroidered with gold." "And what is within?" exclaimed the enraged questioner. "A piece of bread in a cloth," replied the pre-doomed captive.

On being upbraided as a vile heretic, and asked if he did not believe that the true body of Christ was substantially received in the sacrament; he answered, "If the sacrament of the Lord's supper be administered as Christ did ordain it, the faithful receivers do indeed spiritually and truly eat and drink in it Christ's body and blood;" and being pressed whether he understood this participation in the sense maintained by the Roman Catholic church, "really, carnally, and substantially," he declared, "he could not believe so absurd and monstrous a doctrine."

When the court adjourned after this declaration, which was of itself sufficient to seal the fate of him who asserted it, he was privately urged by one of the justices, whose name is not mentioned, to preserve his life by disavowing his opinions; promising that if he would thus conform to the church, he would appoint him his chaplain, with a handsome salary, or procure for him an advantageous farm, if he were disinclined to resume the clerical office.

Palmer, though sensible of the kindness intended, declined the offer, expressing himself, at the same time, ready to yield up his life for Christ and his gospel, if God should be pleased to require the sacrifice; upon which the justice charitably rejoined: "Well, Palmer, I perceive that one of us two must be

damned, for we are of two faiths, and there is but one faith that leads to life and salvation." Palmer answered that he hoped they might be both saved, for that as it had pleased a merciful God, to call him at the third hour of the day, that is, in the prime of life, at the age of twenty-four, so he trusted, that in his infinite goodness, he would graciously call him at the eleventh hour of his old age, and give him an eternal inheritance among the saints in light.

Being remanded back to prison after this conversation, Palmer, on the following morning was required by the commissioners to subscribe to certain articles, which they had gathered from his answers, with the addition of the terms, horrid, heretical, damnable, and execrable doctrines; he refused to subscribe to them, however, till those epithets were expunged, affirming that the doctrines which he held and professed, were not such, but agreeable to, and founded on the word of God: after some altercation, a pen was given to him, and, having made the alterations he desired, he subscribed to the articles, and was immediately asked if he would recant; on his peremptorily refusing, Dr. Jeffery proceeded to read the sentence of condemnation, which gave him up to the secular power, and he suffered, the same afternoon, in the 24th year of his age, in the sand-pits at Newbury; two other persons, who had been delivered over to the power of the sheriff, being burned with him; he suffered with great constancy, while he comforted his two companions at the stake, with several passages from holy scriptures.

THOMAS THACKHAM, 1556.

As Mr. Costes's notice of this person throws some additional light on the interesting history of his predecessor, and also elucidates some passages of his life we have not touched upon, we copy it from that gentleman's work; it appears to be compiled from Fox, and from a defence written by Thackham himself. Thomas Thackham, who had been master once before, succeeded Palmer in the school, but by means very disgraceful to himself. When the first edition of Fox's Book of Martyrs was published, in 1562, Thackham was the minister of a church in Northamptonshire, and was strongly pressed by Sir Robert Lane, and Mr. Yelverton, recorder of that town, to answer Fox's accusation. In consequence, he wrote a long vindication of himself which he sent to Fox, placing in distinct paragraphs, "the Slaunderer," as he constantly stiles the author, and his own answer to every charge.

Thackham begins by expressing his surprise when he was informed that he was in the Book of Martyrs; and, after long debating with himself, concluded that it was on account of his having concealed the Lady Vane in his own house, twenty-one weeks; for which he was first imprisoned at Englefield, by the command of Sir Francis Englefield; and afterwards at Reading,

in Mr. Aldeworth's house, at that time mayor, when neither his wife nor any other person was permitted to speak with him. If not on this occasion, Thackham supposed it might be on account of his interceding with Mr. Edmunds, the mayor of Reading, for one John Bolton, who, in a fit of real or pretended madness, had railed upon Queen Mary. Thackham proceeds to answer "the Slaunderer," paragraph by paragraph; affirming that Palmer did not return to Reading to receive a quarter's stipend, being paid every half year by the auditor; that he resigned the patent for a sum of money paid him by Thackham, who, by agreement, sought a situation for him in some gentleman's family, and placed him with Mr. Ralph Lee, of Horsington. From this family he came to Reading, to see his hostess with whom he had boarded, and to deliver a letter to Mr. Edmunds "concerning his stuff:" bedding, says Thackham, he had none, his apparel no more than he daily wore, never above five or six books, which he took to Horsington. It was said by "the Slaunderer," that Palmer was "brought down into a vyle stynging and blynde dungeon, prepared for thieves and murderers," and there kept hanging by the legs and feet in a pair of stocks, so high that no part of his body touched the ground, and that he remained in this prison ten days. Thackham affirms that Palmer was taken, as he attempted to escape over the garden wall, by the serjeant, who carried him before Mr. Edmunds, and, from his house, to the commissioners, who were then sitting at the Golden Bear. After examination he was committed to close custody, in the gaol or grate, "no deep dungeon to speak of;" where he was well treated by Welch, the keeper, and suffered none of the cruelties mentioned above. Thackham's antagonist next charges him with suborning three false witnesses against Palmer, Cox, Gately, and Downer, who accused him of treason, sedition, surmised murder, and adultery. Of these three persons, only Downer was living when Thackham wrote his defence; to whom, and to the whole town of Reading, he appeals for the truth of what he asserts, that he brought no charge at all against Palmer; and that he never came out of Welch's prison, until he was summoned before the commissioners at Newbury. To this defence Thackham subjoins a particular account of the treaty between him and Palmer, for the patent, which he affirms to have arisen from Palmer's wishing to give up the school, on account of a quarrel between him and one John Rydgies, "the quene's servant, and one of the stable." In Thackham's words, "Palmer had the schole, when he came to Readyng, of one Syr John More vycar of Saynte Giles, in quene Marie's tyme, which he taught diligently, behaved himself honestly, came to the church many sondaies and holi-dayes, with his schollars, and sate in St. Johne's chappell, lyved so quyety among them, that he had not one enemy in the towne." After the quarrel with Rydgies, "Palmer came to me, and said, that he would

give up the schole, yf he might have reasonably for the patent, which hung but upon the life of one olde man, called Cox. I told Palmer, that since Quene Marie came to the crowne, I was put from my vicaridge there, and was constrayned to labour for my lyvyng. For as it is known I went every weke foure-score myles, save four, on foot, to bye yearne, and sell it agayne at Reading, of which tediousse journeys, and payncful travayle I waxed werye. Wherefore I sayd, yf in tyme to come, he were disposed to leave the schole, so that I could getn the good will of the town to have it agayne, I would geve him with reason for the patent." The agreement was made that Palmer should receive 40s. in hand, four pounds more at two convenient times, and that he should be provided with a situation in a gentleman's family. Thackham says that he introduced Palmer to Mr. Lee's family; and then, "after we were returned to Reading agayne, I went to master Edmundes, Mr. Edward Butler, Master Thomas Turner, and Master Aldworthe, my very good frendes, declaring to them that Palmer would leave the schole, and dwell with a gentleman, and desyred them that I might have their good wylls to teache yt agayne, for I was wery of playing the packman, and of my tedyouse journeys to Salisbury wekely, which they annsweryd that they thought no lesse, and that I should have their good wylls to kepe the schole agayne." It was agreed that Mr. Edmunds should keep the patent, Palmer's resignation, and all other writings, until the last payment was made; after which, the patent was delivered to Thackham. Then follows an account of Palmer's coming frequently from Horsyngton to Reading, to visit the Cook's wife, at whose house he had boarded, when he was schoolmaster; of the Cook's jealousy, which was groundless even in Thackham's opinion; and an account of a letter from Palmer to Mr. Edmunds, delivered, at his request, by Thackham, which occasioned Palmer's examination before the Commissioners, his condemnation and death. This seems the original paper sent to Fox; it is written in three or four different hands, but is signed, as it appears, by Thackham's own hand; dated "from Northampton the xxxth of January the yeare off our salvation 157ij, by me Thomas Thackham."

To this defence is subjoined, in the M.S. a "reply to an indiscrete answer made by Thomas Thackham, sometime of Reading, against the story of Julius Palmer, martyr." This consists of sixty two folio pages, in a small hand, closely written; but seems imperfect. To abridge it would be difficult; and, therefore, it may be sufficient to say, that in all material points, the answer confirms what has been related above, concerning the circumstances immediately preceding Palmer's death, but attributes his apprehension to the contrivance of Thackham, who was offended at being called upon for the remainder of the money due for the patent. He also contradicts Thackham's account in a variety of particular facts. This

M.S. does not appear to have been printed; but the account given in it is corroborated by "Informations gathered at Reading Anno 1571, touching the story of Julius Palmer, martyr." Several witnesses confirm the account of the manner in which Palmer was taken, that it was at the Cardinal's Hat; contrary to Thackham's assertion: that Hampton, "sometyme their scholemaster, met him there," that Palmer imputed the cause of his trouble to no man so much as Thackham; of whom he had not received all his money. It is likewise affirmed that the Lady Vane, whom Thackham says he concealed, called him a "dissembling hypocrite;" and that Thackham had seduced a weak young woman, a servant of one Stanshall. Fox applied for farther information to Thomas Perry, a clergyman of unblemished character in Gloucestershire, who gave the strongest testimony to the truth of Fox's narrative. Thackham protested in the pulpit, in the beginning of Queen Mary's reign, that he would seal his doctrine with his blood; but afterwards retracted. In the time of Edward VI., probably he concealed his true sentiments, or professed himself a protestant; but he is charged with having brought into the church "leaves of old popish service; and that he, with others, did helpe to patch together the books, and to sing the first Latin Evensong in the church of St. Lawrence." This must have been on Queen Mary's accession; for, in the churchwarden's book of St. Lawrence, in 1553, is a memorandum of a desk left "in the hands of Mr. Thackham, beying our vicar;" and, in 1559, "to Mr. Thackham for 2 weeks service, vs."

It is very clear, from the authorities cited above by Coates, that great disgrace attaches itself to the character of this unworthy principal of Reading school; his effrontery prospered, and he became comparatively wealthy from the fruits of his ill faith, or rather from the want of all faith, two circumstances which render him peculiarly open to the application of that expressive line in the *Flaid*:

Rich was the man in brass, and rich in gold.

The succeeding masters were scarcely of sufficient celebrity to require very particular notice; we subjoin a list of their names, however, rather because it may occasionally prove useful to refer to in cases of dispute, than from any remarkable merit in their possessors, or from any peculiar interest belonging to the subject.

JOHN SMITH, 1569,

a native of Berkshire, and fellow of St. John's, Oxford, succeeded Thackham, he was presented to the vicarage of St. Lawrence, in 1574; resigned the mastership in 1583, and died in 1596.

JOHN HAMPTON, 1583,

held the government of the school five years, and was followed by the

Rev. THOMAS BRADDOCK, 1588;

the supposed author of a translation into Latin, of Bishop Jewel's "Defence of the Apology for the Church of England."

Rev. THOMAS CHARLTON, 1596;

Coates says he probably inhabited the old Mitre Tavern, as his predecessor did; for he rented the "tenement at the west church doore," in 1596; which coming into the church's hands, was ordered to be charged in future five shillings, and is called in the churchwarden's book "parcall of the schoolmaster's house."

JOHN RAWLINSON, 1600,

is mentioned as schoolmaster in a decree of the 42nd of Elizabeth, directing Sir Francis Knolly's, and others, to hold a commission for the examining into the church lands of St. Lawrence.

ANDREW BIRD, 1610,

is thought to be the same with Andrew Bird of Merton college, who commenced doctor of physic, in 1618, and practised in this town, with great reputation; this supposition is probably correct, as the latter year, in which we conclude Mr. Bird to have resigned, is also the date of his successor's coming into office.

JOHN DENNISON, 1618;

was chaplain to George, Duke of Buckingham, and to James I.; and was successively vicar of all the three churches in Reading; he died, in 1628.

WILLIAM PAGE, 1628:

appointed to the mastership, through the influence of Laud, then bishop of London, or, according to Man, at the particular request of Charles I. In 1642, he was sequestered by the Berkshire commissioners, and the school room was converted, by their orders, into a magazine for the soldiers, then ingarrison here. He retired to his rectory at East Locking, in this county; and, at the restoration, when Mr. Singleton was master, he obtained a writ of restitution to the school, which was publicly read, but was not followed by his re-assuming his old dignity: he died in 1663.

MR. POCOCK, 1645,

got possession of the office in turbulent times, without the consent of the corporation, who made various attempts to displace him; one charge brought against him was for incapacity, but notwithstanding the proceedings noticed in the following entry from the diary, he contrived to retain the mastership till 1649.

"Upon enquiry made concerning the ability and diligence of the schoolmaster, in the free school in Reading, it was resolved as followeth; upon several complaints against Mr. Pocock, the schoolmaster of Reading, and examination of the proficiencies of his scholars, in his presence, (he himself refusing to be examined, and declining all other ingenious ways of trial, by the visitors) we do conceive the said Mr. Pocock to be altogether unable to govern the school aforesaid; and, therefore,

we do not approve of the said Mr. Pocock, as having any right, for the time to come, to receive twenty pounds per annum. payable to the schoolmaster of Reading, by the will and grant of the late archbishop of Canterbury." We have already noticed the articles of enquiry which the visitors agreed upon, and appointed to be put to future masters, at the periods of visitation.

WILLIAM WADDON, 1650.

GABRIEL REEVE, 1652.

ROBERT JENNINGS, 1655,

was shortly after expelled by the commissioners appointed for ejecting all such as were then styled "scandalous, ignorant, and insufficient ministers, and schoolmasters;" but it is very probable that his having borne arms for Charles I., in the garrison of Oxford, was the true cause of his expulsion, after which he became a private tutor, and, subsequently, master of the free school, at Abingdon; at the restoration, the authorities of Reading, paid him the compliment of offering to re-instate him in the mastership, which he did not accept: he died in February, 1703, in the 83rd year of his age.

THOMAS GERRARD, 1655;

appointed by an order of his highness the Lord Protector; he performed the duties of his office during four years, when the order by which he held it was declared illegal; he resisted the decree of the new powers, but a verdict was given against him, at Abingdon, and Mr. Jennings appointed, who, however, declining the proffered honour.

— EDWARDS, 1659,

was elected, and resigned the following year.

THOMAS SINGLETON, 1660;

enjoyed the dignity of head-master during two years, part of which time he officiated by deputy. After his secession, he kept a very flourishing school, in London, where the celebrated doctor Mead became one of his pupils.

THOMAS THACKHAM, 1662.

THOMAS IRELAND, 1668;

retired through mental derangement.

WILLIAM GOSTWICK, 1673.

THOMAS MAY, 1687.

HAVILAND JOHN HILEY, 1716;

"*The Busby* of the seminary."

JOHN SPICER, 1750,

who had been formerly a pupil, and afterwards assistant to Mr. Hiley; he became rector of Tidmarsh, and Sulham; and prebend of Preston, in Salisbury Cathedral. Mr. Coates speaks in very warm terms of him, as possessing, in an eminent degree, learning, industry, and amiability; Mr. Spicer resigned in 1771.

WILLIAM WISE, 1771.

RICHARD VALPY, 1781;

a native of Jersey. During four years he was second master of the school at Bury in Suffolk; in 1787, he was presented to the rectory of Stradishall, in Suffolk; and was admitted bachelor and doctor of divinity, in January; 1752.

Rev. F. VALPY, 1830,

the present master, elected on the resignation of the above.

The number of students at present attending the *Free School*, is, we believe, forty; more than half of whom are boarders. The parents of a *free* scholar are charged £10 per annum for his education. At no very distant period the yearly expence of maintaining a pupil on the foundation amounted to £4; while in Palmer's time, the instruction afforded by the school was, as its name imports, and, we suppose, in more strict accordance with the will of the founder, entirely *free*. Mr. Man says, in a note to his account of the martyr, that for a long time the nature of the foundation has been misunderstood, and he attributes the departure from the original charitable system, to the introduction of boarders; we do not ourselves understand why the introduction of the system of boarding pupils in the master's house should make the school less free to those for whose express and sole advantage it was founded. It is, or, at least, ought to be, a charity school for the benefit of the town, but probably few gentlemen would send their sons to it under such a name, while the present charge of ten pounds per annum, for a *free* education for a day scholar rescues the school from such an appellation, and secures to the boarders the society of companions of a more elevated class than is usually to be found in charitable establishments. The fault of the innovation rests, no doubt, with the party who introduced it, and it is perhaps of little actual importance *now*, when free establishments are so multiplied, but before the present age of cheap education the change must have been one of serious consequence and wrong to the town;—we acknowledge the merits of Reading school as it is now conducted, but high as we believe them to be, we fully agree with a former writer upon

the subject, it is a "seminary for the education of gentlemen's sons, whose parents being better able to reward the literary abilities of the masters, their reception has been encouraged, to the almost total exclusion of those for whom it was designed."

THE BLUE COAT SCHOOL.

This school, which is situated in the parish of St. Giles, at the corner of Silver-street, on the south side of the London road, was founded by Richard Aldworth, Esq. in the year 1656. This gentleman bequeathed the sum of four thousand pounds to the corporation, in trust, for the purpose of maintaining a schoolmaster lecturer, and twenty boys; with this sum, the trustees purchased the lease of a house called the Talbot, which was soon after taken down, and the present building erected on the old site, in 1723, a lease for five hundred years having been obtained from the proprietor, Mr. Blgrave, at the yearly rent of eight pounds, and a fine of eight pounds at the end of every ten years. Mr. Aldworth's donation was further applied, in 1657 and 1659, to the purchase of two farms, near Basingstoke, for the sum of three thousand nine hundred and ninety pounds; these farms comprised three hundred and sixty acres and a half of arable, meadow, and wood land, and produced an annual revenue of about £200.

In 1666 the funds of the school were increased by the donation of Sir Thomas Rich, of Sonning, who bequeathed one thousand pounds to be applied to the education of six boys; one to be chosen out of each of the three parishes, and the three others from the parish of Sonning. With this legacy, the corporation purchased an estate at Streatly, which produces annually £54.

In 1696, Mr. John Hall bequeathed a rent charge, now of the annual value of £25. 15s. on lands at Englefield, in Berks, and Silchester in Hampshire, for the establishment of a school in Chain-lane, and the instruction of three boys, one to be chosen out of each parish; with this sum the corporation were to

supply a house for the schoolmaster, and allow him a salary of £18. per annum, with a cloak every two years of the value of 40s., a small sum was also allotted to provide each boy, on leaving the school with a bible, and shoes and stockings. and £6. to apprentice him with; but the fund having been found insufficient for their maintenance, the boys have been transferred to the blue-coat school, and the old school house, in Chain-lane is now a dispensary, and one of the most valuable and best managed charitable establishments that Reading can boast of.*

In 1720, Mr. John West, a general benefactor to the town, gave, for the particular maintenance and education of six poor boys, and for apprenticing them, the sum of one thousand pounds, producing annually £49. 16s., he also gave fee farm rents to the annual value of £6. 5s. 3d., for the same purpose, and vested them in the corporation.

In 1723, Mr. Malthus left £91. yearly, for the education and support of ten green-coat boys; (Man says *eleven*, but thinks this number may be incorrect) and, in the same year, a sum of £15. per year was given by Mr. John Pottenger, for the maintenance of two more.

"And 1786, Mr. John Leggatt, as a mark of his gratitude for the maintenance and education he had received in the school, left the sum of £50. towards its support, without entailing it with any further burdens."

The endowment of the school for the maintenance of less than fifty boys, and independent of the master's salary, house-rent, repairs, &c. is stated to be £384.; a sum so inadequate for the purposes for which it has been bequeathed, that the corporation

* It was discovered, after the removal of the boys of Mr. Hall's school to the Blue-coat establishment, that a Mrs. Norwood, who died about the year 1780, had left by will to the corporation, the reversion of three thousand pounds stock, for the encrease of Mr. Hall's school, in Reading, after the decease of a Mrs. Whitehorn; if this fact had been earlier known, the corporation would have been enabled to continue the school on its old foundation, and to have doubled the number of the boys.

have at times been compelled to reduce the number of boys, though, in general, by the strictest economy and care, the school is nearly full. It has been cited as a proof that the corporation desire to render this useful charity as beneficial to the poorer inhabitants as was intended by the founders, that they have, within these few years, expended more than three thousand pounds, besides what the bequeathed funds of the school have afforded, in keeping up, as near as possible the original number of boys. But this, says Mr, Man, could not be effected without intrenching on some other charities less beneficial.

The house is a plain building, and consists of a centre and two wings, with a brick wall enclosing a very circumscribed space, (viz. forty feet square) as a play ground for the boys. At each extremity of the wings is a carved figure of a boy, attired in the old school dresses, one in blue and the other in green; each holds a bible with his right hand, and points upwards with the fore finger of the left. The following inscriptions are on two tablets placed in the wall, beneath the figures.

THE BLUE-COAT BOY.

Clad in this hieroglyphic veil,
Two mystic emblems I reveal;
The sacred volume in my hand.
Directs you to the promised land.
My azure mantle of the sky,
To heav'n above directs your eye;
While to its seat I guide your look,—
Your guide to find it is this book.

THE GREEN-COAT BOY.

The Great Creator, at its birth,
Did in my garment cloath the earth,
Whose emblem sets before your eyes,
The scene of the first paradise.
The sacred oracles that tell
How from it our first parents fell,
Here teach us how, by grace to win
The paradise they lost by sin.

THE GREEN SCHOOL.

This school, which also derives its name from the dress of the children educated in it, is for the reception of girls only, who are daughters of decayed tradesmen belonging to one of the three parishes, or orphans who have been left unprovided for by their parents, and who are not younger than ten years, nor older than twelve years and a half.

This useful establishment was founded and instituted in 1782, through the suggestion and exertions of the three vicars, (the Rev. Charles Sturges, the Rev. Doctor Nicholls, and the Rev. W. B. Cadogan,) seconded by the zeal and liberality of John Richards, Esq., who was, at the time, senior alderman of the borough; the proceeds arising from the preaching of Mr. West's annual charity sermon, on St. Thomas's day, and the support liberally and generally afforded by the public contributions, enabled the above gentlemen, who became trustees, and the committee of six ladies, as governesses, and the mayor and senior alderman, as governors,* to open the school, on michaelmas day of the year mentioned, for the lodging and teaching of six girls, two being elected from each parish. The old school was situated in St. Mary's Butt's; three years after its opening, the number of girls was increased to nine, and in 1789, the funds in the management of the committee, were found sufficient to admit of the reception of three more.

In the following year the school was removed to the neat and commodious building it now occupies, in Broad-street, where, aided by the voluntary subscriptions of the public, its funds gradually increased, and the number of girls admitted increased in proportion; in 1792, there were fifteen; in 1793, eighteen; in 1795, twenty-one; and it affords maintenance and education, at present, to between twenty and thirty.

* The committee is still formed upon the same plan; the six ladies are selected two from each parish; the governors are the mayor and the senior alderman; and the trustees are the three vicars, for the time being.

The pamphlet published by the trustees, descriptive of the "Reading Girls' Charity School," has been quoted by both the local historians of the borough, and as the authority is unquestionable and superior to all other sources of information, we cannot do better than follow the precedent, and, by embodying the two quotations, afford our readers the fullest description in our power of this excellent charity.

"The girls are furnished with green gowns, at their admission, by the charity, and neatly, plainly, and decently clothed in the same uniform dress, every year, with other suitable articles of apparel. While at school they are brought up in the habits of diligence and industry, to do all kinds of plain work, chiefly at the Royal Asylum prices; to cut out linen, mark, knit; to perform the business of the house and kitchen; to wash, iron, and get up linen, and thus to qualify themselves for good and useful servants; and they are encouraged by a reward of two-pence, to be deducted out of every shilling that is paid for needle-work, performed by them, which needle-work has been approved by their employers, and of which they have, in general, great plenty upon their hands.

"They are regularly trained up in the principles of the christian religion, in virtue and modesty, honesty and truth; in decency, humility, civility, and mutual kindness, and in all due subordination; and an account of their behaviour is given to the governesses, governors, or trustees, at their frequent visits, to superintend the government of the school. They rise early; prayers are read every morning in the family; after which they make the beds, and sweep the rooms. They breakfast at eight; at nine o'clock, school begins, when lessons in the old and new testaments, and in Mrs. Trimmer's abridgement of the sacred scriptures are read. They are taught to spell from Mrs. Trimmer's Charity-school spelling book, and Entick's dictionary, and to say their prayers and hymns by heart. They are instructed in Crossman's introduction to the Knowledge of the Christian Religion. After reading and spelling, they work till twelve; at twelve they dine, play one hour after din-

ner, and then return to their work, till it grows dark in the winter, when they leave off till six o'clock, and return to reading and working till eight. In summer they continue at their work, from about half-past one till, six, and then leave off for play or walking till eight. At eight they sup, and, after prayers have been read to them in the evening, they go to bed about nine. With the mistress, or assistant, or both, they attend divine worship at St. Mary's church, on certain week days, and twice on every sunday, when they likewise hear no inconsiderable part of the psalmody of the church, from the gallery, in which they are placed, during divine service.

"For the last half year of their continuance in the school, they are taught by a proper master to write and cast accounts. When they are in their fifteenth year, they are regularly examined before the committee, with respect to their proficiency, and in or at the expiration of that year, they are, with the approbation of the committee, bound apprentices to creditable and respectable house-keepers, in or out of the borough of Reading; as domestic servants; or, to learn a trade for the space of four or five years, upon condition that five pounds shall be paid, or allowed by the charity, for their being clothed, according to the following articles: one bonnet, three night caps, three day caps, one coloured handkerchief, one white handkerchief, two gowns, one quilted petticoat, one baize petticoat, three shifts, one pair of stays, two pair of stockings, one pair of pattens, one pair of shoes, two coloured aprons, two white aprons, one pair of pockets, one pair of gloves, one cloak, buckles, and other odd articles. And upon condition that the masters and mistresses shall be bound to find them in every thing afterwards, for the term of their apprenticeship; and at the expiration of that term, to cloth them as well as they were clothed at the beginning of their apprenticeship, or to pay the sum of five pounds, in trust to the governors and trustees, to be laid out for the use of the girls.

"The girls upon leaving the school, are furnished with a Bible and Common Prayer Book, the Whole

Duty of Man, and Crossman's Introduction to the Knowledge of the Christian Religion. To encourage them to behave well, and do credit to the institution after they have left it, the girls, at the expiration of half their apprenticeships, upon producing to the committee a certificate, signed by their masters or mistresses, of their good behaviour, are rewarded with half a guinea; and at the expiration of the whole of their apprenticeships, upon the same conditions, they receive another half guinea; and we have the satisfaction to add, that several girls have produced the required certificates, and received the rewards at both periods.

“Besides the frequent attention of the ladies, and other members of the committee, to this charity, the committee meets at the school-house, for the election of girls, or whenever any particular business is to be transacted. Once in a year, the accounts are regularly audited, and signed. A report of the charity is published in the Reading paper: and the charity books, with one of which every member of the committee is furnished, are filled up at Michaelmas Day, in every year. Every St. Thomas's Day a sermon is preached alternately, at each church, and a collection made at the church doors for the benefit of this charity, the amount of which is carried to the original fund.

“The foundation deed, with a declaration of trust, was enrolled in His Majesty's High Court of Chancery, on the 5th day of February, 1793.”

THE FOUNDATION SCHOOL.

In the year 1705, Mr. Joseph Neal, of Gray's Inn, London, empowered his executors by will, to dispose of his property in charitable uses; these gentlemen, Samuel Neal, and Dr. Frederick Slare, applied three hundred pounds out of the testator's effects, in purchasing heritable land for the better maintenance of a charity school, at Pottern, in Wiltshire, reserving, however, to the trustees the power of transferring the money to the use or establishment of any other school within the diocese. This right was exercised

by Mr. Fox, vicar of St. Mary's, who, in 1766, removed the school from Pottern to its present situation, in a small house forming part of the Oracle in Minster-street. In the room, next the street, there is some old carved wainscotting, apparently coeval with the building of the Oracle itself; and there is a chimney piece in the apartment behind, of a still more remote date. Coates thinks the house is the one named in the corporation deed of purchase as "tenement opposite the Rose Inn, in Minster-street." Twenty six children are taught to read and work here, namely, eight boys and eighteen girls. The capital is now £314. 15s. 11d. South Sea Stock, producing annually the sum of £11.

THE LANCASTRIAN SCHOOL.

In the year 1809, Reading was visited by the celebrated Joseph Lancaster, for the purpose of reading his lectures explanatory of his new system of education; this proceeding was attended with so much success, that several gentlemen of the town were induced to undertake the establishment of a school on the novel and popular Lancastrian plan, and, having formed themselves into a committee, they hired a room and commenced with a hundred boys; the result of the experiment exceeded the expectations of its patrons, who, in consequence of the large encrease of the subscriptions were soon enabled to extend the benefits of the system to a much more extended circle than was at first contemplated; they accordingly purchased a piece of land in Southampton-street, in the name of trustees nominated for the purpose, on which they erected a building sufficiently large for the accommodation of from three to four hundred boys; the expense of the purchase of land, and building amounted to nearly six hundred pounds. For the future government of the enlarged establishment the number of the managing committee was encreased to twenty-one, with a treasurer and secretary, who were elected by the subscribers. Having procured one of Mr. Lancaster's teachers to undertake the

superintendence of the school, the committee opened the new building in November, 1810, when two hundred children were at once admitted; the number is now about three hundred and fifty; the yearly cost for each boy does not exceed six shillings, and the whole annual expenditure, including the master's salary, does not amount to more than one hundred and ten pounds. The school is inspected monthly by two visitors, members of the committee, when they enter their observations in a book kept for the purpose, which is read at the monthly meeting of the general committee of management, who, with the subscribers, have frequently expressed the satisfaction with which they have witnessed the improvement of the children under the care of the superintendent; every information is readily afforded by the master of the school to the enquiries of any person, though not a subscriber,* who may think proper to visit the school, and, indeed the public inspection is courted by all interested in its welfare, as the best means of increasing the number of its supporters by being prepared at all times to point out the merits of the institution. A small box is kept to receive the donations of these casual visitors, which are subsequently divided among those whose conduct or progress is considered worthy of being rewarded; and, as a further encouragement, a bible is given to such boys, (on their leaving the school) as have attracted the notice and approbation of the committee, by their good behaviour and improvement.

Annual Subscribers of one guinea have the privilege of nominating two children to be instructed in the school; and subscribers of ten guineas, at one payment, have the same privilege, and are governors for life.

Children are admitted from the age of five years, by a written recommendation from a subscriber, and the parents are not only required to send them neat and clean in their appearance, (a neglect of which request would be followed by dismissal) but they are

* It is necessary, however, that he be introduced by a subscriber.

also enjoined to attend with them some place of worship every Lord's day; a regulation the more necessary to be observed, as the object of the institution is solely to instruct the children in reading, writing, and arithmetic, in order to render them more useful members of society, "without any reference whatsoever to sect or party in religious opinions." The hours of school attendance are from nine to twelve o'clock, and from two till four; between the first day of November and the twenty-fifth of March; during the remainder of the year, the hours are, in the morning, from eight to twelve; and, in the afternoon, from two to five; each Saturday afternoon is considered a half-holiday, and there are two vacations, of a fortnight each, in August and December. In the event of a child being expelled for improper behaviour, or other cause, immediate notice of the fact is given to the subscriber who presented him, that the vacancy may be filled up as soon as convenient. The annual subscriptions are collected by the master, who on depositing them in the hands of the treasurer, receives sixpence in the pound; if the master is desirous of leaving his situation, he is required to give two months notice in writing to the committee; and if the latter find just cause to remove him, they cannot do so without sending him a similar written notice.

THE NATIONAL SCHOOL,

Was established through the exertions of many influential gentlemen of the town and neighbourhood, aided by the clergy of the established church, who considered Mr. Lancaster's plan deficient as it only extended its benefits to boys, but more particularly because it neglected to inculcate any peculiar religious system on the minds of the children. At a meeting held, on the 18th of April, 1812, the sum of four hundred and twenty-four pounds was subscribed, to meet the current expences of opening a school on Doctor Bell's plan of education, and the additional sum of one hundred and three pounds nine shillings was promised in annual payments, for its further

support. The plan differs very little from the Lancastrian, but it was adopted, as we have already said, because it was considered preferable in providing for the education of female children as well as of boys, and that, together with reading, writing, and arithmetic, the children are taught the church catechism, and are brought up in the tenets of the English Protestant Church, exclusive of all others.*

With the sums subscribed, the committee erected two spacious rooms within the walls of the great hall of the abbey, sufficient to contain from three to four hundred children, with apartments, at the east end for the residence of the master and mistress, which were opened on the 6th of September, 1813, when nearly one hundred children were admitted.

The society for conducting the school is carried on in general conformity with the plans of the national society in London, with which body it maintains a correspondence. The funds are under the management of a committee, any five are competent to act; but no rules or regulations they make, can be carried into effect, until they have been approved by the patron, president, and three of the vice-presidents of the society; the holders of all which offices, as well as all persons subscribing not less than two guineas a year, or making a donation of five guineas, and being also annual subscribers, and likewise all beneficed clergymen, in the deanery of Reading, being subscribers to the society, or to the national society in London, are competent to become members of the acting committee.

THE SCHOOL OF INDUSTRY.

This school, situated in Friar-street, was established in the year 1802, under the patronage of Mrs. Cadogan, for female children, who are taught reading

* The third regulation adopted by the committee of the Lancastrian school, says "that no book of instruction be introduced into the school, but the holy scriptures, (without comments) extracts therefrom, Watt's hymns for children, and lessons in spelling and arithmetic."

and plain work, and are provided with clothes to appear in at church, on each Sabbath day. It is chiefly supported by the voluntary contributions of several ladies in the town, to whose active exertions, the school is mainly indebted for the high character it bears among charitable establishments of the same nature. There are at present 32 children here, but the number has at various times, been greater; none are received into the school who have not attained the age of 7, or who exceed 12, though they are allowed to remain in it after that age, if their conduct merits the further extension towards them of the benevolence of the founder, or if retaining them is likely to be attended with advantage to themselves.

In addition to the schools we have already noticed, there are Sunday-schools in each of the three parishes, established by subscription of members of the Church of England; and others also, founded and supported by the charitable donations and exertions of members of the various dissenting congregations. Mr. Edward Simeon, an eminent benefactor to the town of Reading, was accustomed, previous to his death, to clothe annually all the children attending these schools, who, with the many other objects of that philanthropist's extensive bounty, assembled every year, in the market place, on the election of a new mayor, and were regaled with plumb cake; at his decease, he bequeathed £2500. in trust to the corporation, to apply the annual interest arising therefrom in continuing to provide the Sunday-school children with new clothes, to be given them the day before that of electing the mayor, on which day they all attend divine service in St. Lawrence's church. There are several private scholastic establishments in Reading, which, however, do not come within our province further than to observe that they are generally remarkable for the diligence and ability with which they are conducted by their respective principals*

* Besides the schools we have above enumerated there is an Infant School, in London-street, conducted on Mr. Wilderspin's plan, the utility of which is very highly spoken of. The committee have lately received a munificent donation, from

THE ORACLE.

The origin of the above name given to the building so called, near St. Mary's church is variously, and unsatisfactorily accounted for; and, as we have no means of settling the disputed term ourselves we will, before we more fully notice this establishment, quote the reasons adduced by Coates and Man, for the application of its present name, and leave our readers to judge between the parties. "Whence this building," says the former gentleman, "received its name of the Oracle, can only be conjectured." The house purchased by the corporation bears no such name in the deeds relative to it, but is only described as a tenement opposite the Rose Inn, in Minster-street; and there was no large house standing on the ground purchased by Mr. Blagrove, that plot having cost only £32.

"The name therefore of the Oracle, or the Oracle-house, was given to the building erected by the corporation; and if the conjecture may be hazarded, perhaps took its origin from the handsome entrance or portico in Minster-street: such an entrance or portico being frequently termed an *Oriel*, an appellation which might easily be corrupted to Oracle."

In support of this opinion Mr. Coates cites Matthew Paris, and Mr. Cowel, on the origin of *Oriel* College, Oxford; but Mr. Man shows that the word *Oriolum*, in Matthew Paris, signifies rather a hall or room adjoining a gateway than the gateway itself, and is moreover disinclined to imagine that the entrance to the Oracle could ever have been deemed of sufficient importance to have given a name to the whole building. "The difficulty in this case, I conceive, arises wholly from the mistaken orthography of the name, which was probably given to it accidentally, from the principal ingredient used in the

Mrs. W. Stephens of £100, which sum they have appropriated to the purchase of a piece of ground, situated between Castle-street and Oxford Road, on which a school-room has been erected; the additional sum required having been raised by subscription.

dying business; for though the Oracle was intended for the convenience of carrying on every branch of the woollen manufactory, yet it was more particularly so for the business of dying; many of the weavers being allowed to have looms in their own houses, but were obliged to bring all their cloth to be dyed at the Oracle.

“Among the articles principally used in the dying business, as then practised, was a drug originally brought from the Canary Islands, called *Orchal*, but imported into this country from Italy, where it was called *Oricello*, in Latin *Oricola*; from either of which, I presume the Oracle might derive its present name. This drug was thought of sufficient consequence to claim the attention of the legislature, as appears from several statutes that were passed in different reigns, concerning it.* It was of such general use, that there can be no doubt, but large quantities were stored up in some part of the building, which might be called the *Orchal-house*, and from the frequent use made of the term, be afterwards applied to the whole of the building. This is the more probable, as from whatever cause it arose, it is certain the name now given to it, was wholly accidental, it having, for nearly a century after its erection, been called in the corporation books, the *work-house*, and so it is styled in Archbishop Laud’s decree.”

The building was erected in consequence of a legacy, bequeathed in 1624, by Mr. John Kendrick, (who had been a very successful merchant in the woollen trade†)

* “*Orchal*, mentioned in the statutes of Richard III., Henry VIII., and Edward VI., seems to be a kind of cork, or rather stone, like alum, which dyers use in their colours.—*Jacob’s Law Dictionary*.

“Others say it is a kind of moss growing in the Canaries, called by the Spaniards *Orchilla*; but whether it was a vegetable or a mineral, all agree that it was used in dying a blue colour; and the trifling difference in the sound between *Orchal* and *Oracle*, leaves little room to doubt, but that the latter is a corruption of the former, and, as such, has given the present name to this building.”

† “John Kendrick borne at Reading, bred a draper in London. His state may be compared to the mustard-seed, from a

to the mayor and burgesses, in trust, of the sum of seven thousand five hundred pounds for the purpose of purchasing or erecting a strong and commodious house, in which the poor might be constantly employed, and to provide materials for carrying on the clothing trade, and for working in wool, hemp, flax, grinding Brazil-wood, or preparing materials for dying. With part of the sum bequeathed, the corporation purchased a house in Minster-street, and a piece of ground adjoining, (the property of Anthony Blagrave, Esq.) upon which the present house was built, at the expence of £1,846; they also purchased some land in North-street, in the parish of Tylehurst, chargeable with an annuity of £50, to Mrs. Anne Newman, Mr. Kendrick's sister, for the term of her natural life; and, at her decease, that rent charge was to be applied to the necessities of the poor of the three parishes of Reading for ever. The full appropriation of the sum bequeathed is thus accounted for, in the chamberlain's accounts.

	£	s.	d.
For land in North-street, and for ground to build the house upon - - - - -	1,900	0	0
To Mr. Blagrave for a garden - - - - -	32	0	0
Amount of several items for building the house - - - - -	1,846	0	0
Stock employed in the work-house - - - - -	3,600	0	0
Goods bought of Mr. Kendrick - - - - -	122	0	0
For Mr. Kendrick's picture - - - - -	5	0	0
	<hr/>		
	£7,505	0	0

Coates also mentions the sum of £150 laid out in a purchase at Mattingley, towards the maintenance of early prayers in St. Mary's church, which the poor

small, encreasing to a prodigious bigness. If benefactors were digested as David's Worthies, Mr. Kendrick would be, (if not the last of the first) the first of the second three. His charity begun at his *kindred*, proceeded to his *friends and servants* (to whom he left large legacies) and concluded with the *poor*, on whom he bestowed above £20,000, Reading and Newbury sharing the deepest therein; as appears by his printed will. He dyed 30th September. 1624, and is buried in St. Christopher's, London; to the curate of which parish he gave £20 a year for ever."

Fuller's Worthies : page 51.

were to attend before they began their labour; and he adds in a note, "the early prayers are now at six of the clock in the summer, except on Wednesdays, Fridays, and Saints' days; and at half-past seven, from Michaelmas to Lady Day.

For a few years, it is said, the woollen manufactory, was carried on with great success; but so early as 1639, complaint was made that the poorer class of manufacturers, for whose advantage the money had been bequeathed, were deprived of the use of it, while the corporation either appropriated it to purposes foreign to the testators intentions, or disposed of it among their own friends in the clothing line, who, from the capitals they thus possessed, were enabled to undersell their poorer competitors in the same line; application was made to the existing government, by the inhabitants, in consequence of which the management of the charity was in some degree altered; but the decree issued by Charles I. to that effect was never acted upon to the full extent required, and, during the civil wars, which soon after succeeded, the Oracle was converted into a garrison, and the guard constantly kept there, provided with wood and coals at the expence of the town; it was subsequently appropriated as a refuge for the houseless poor, who were chiefly supported by the parish alms. In 1664, it was thought proper to make the poor received into the house, to contribute something towards their own support; they were accordingly set to work, and wheels and materials were provided for their use, the charge of which was defrayed out of the hall revenues. It is supposed that the clothing manufactory was shortly after revived at the Oracle, as there appears an entry in the corporation diary, in 1695, directing Mr. Samuel Watlington, who had £200 of Mr. Kendrick's money, "to employ twenty poor persons chargeable to each parish." There is also an order, in 1696, "for the blue boys' gowns to be bought of Mr. Watlington, mayor, of that cloth which is made in the Oracle." About the commencement of the reign of William and Mary, several large sums of money were lost by the failure of the persons

to whom they were intrusted, for the purpose of employing the poor, to the amount of £1,100; and the city of London, in the name of the governors of Christ's Hospital, bringing various charges of mismanagement against the corporation here, claimed the whole of the legacy, for the benefit of the boys educated there, as that establishment had a reversionary right, by the will of the donor, to the whole of the charity, in case of its misapplication by the corporation of Reading. The claim, however, was unsuccessful, as the governors of the charity acted upon a decree procured for them by Archbishop Laud, which conferred the entire right of acting upon their own discretion; at the time of the claim made by the city of London, this decree was confirmed by the Lord Chancellor, after a strict examination of witnesses, and a close inspection of all books and papers connected with the subject. "By this decree, the reversionary right of Christ's Hospital, in case of the mismanagement of the trust by the corporation, appears to be abolished, and the whole management of the charity henceforward entrusted to the existing corporation, without any apparent responsibility or risk of forfeiture."

In 1726, the increase of the annual expences for the support of the poor, suggested to some of the principal inhabitants the idea of incorporating them into one body; an agreement was consequently entered into by the authorities of the three parishes, to unite in maintaining and employing their poor; the Oracle was fitted up by the corporation for their reception; but the expences were defrayed by the several parishes in equal proportions according to the number of poor each placed in the house, and the produce of the labour of the inmates was applied to the use of that parish to which they respectively belonged. This establishment, though commenced with spirit, and conducted, for some time, with success, was discontinued, at what precise period is not apparent, but it is supposed, in consequence of the parish of St. Giles declining to send their poor, and of some dissensions among the inmates themselves. This praiseworthy

scheme having thus failed, the building has ever since been applied, according to the decree, for the use of manufacturers residing in the town, the principal branches of trade, at present carried on here, are pin-making, the manufactory of hemp and flax for sack-making, and one of ribbons, silk, and twine, which, jointly afford employment to a great number of poor.

The building itself is quadrangular, enclosing a square court of about one hundred and thirty feet in length; the entrance or portico, though now in a very dilapidated condition, bears some faint traces of former beauty; it consists of a stone gateway, the pediment of which is supported by two pillars of the composite order, standing on slight pedestals; there is a niche in the centre, between the capitals, intended probably for a statue, but it is not known that any was ever erected there. Within the gateway are two folding doors of oak, covered with very elaborate carved ornaments; on the left hand leaf are the initials I. K., with a lion between them, supposed to be the crest of the Kendrick family; and on the right I. K., 1628. On the right of the gateway, within, are some alms-houses, inhabited by poor persons of the different parishes, who are appointed by the mayor. On the south side, are the workshops formerly occupied by the dyers, behind which runs the Holy or Hallowed Brook; the remainder of the quadrangle consists of workshops, and there is, besides, a large piece of ground, close to a branch of the Kennett, formerly used as a tenter ground and garden, employed for the spinning of yarn, and other purposes. "The whole," says Mr. Man, "was exceedingly well adapted for the purposes for which it was intended, and might have been of considerable advantage to the trading inhabitants of the town, had the funds intended for its support, been properly administered."

THE TOWN HALL.

This commodious building was erected in 1786, over the free-school, and under the superintendence of Mr. alderman Poulton, in consequence of the old

edifice being found inconvenient for the purposes to which it was originally appropriated;* in a niche, over the entrance of the ancient building, there was a stone tablet, with the following inscription, showing it to have been erected at the public expence, but whether by subscription among the inhabitants, or by what other means, is not known.

Auspiciis Caroli 2 di Regis,
Curiam hanc laBentem refici
Augeri et ornari Curaverunt
Sumptu publico Prætor et
Decuriones hujus Municipii
Liberali ope Johis Blagrove
Armigeri non parum adjuti.

MDCLXXII.

The cost of re-building the Hall amounted to above £1800, which was defrayed by the corporation; it is a very handsome room, 108 feet long, 32 wide, and 24 high. At each end are courts conveniently fitted up for holding the Lent Assizes. During the time the Judges are here, on the circuit, their expences, which are not limited, are paid by the corporation; in the corporation diary for 1640, their allowance is entered at "one mutton, one veal, three barrels of beer, one gallon of sack, and one gallon of claret." Adjoining the Town Hall, is the Council Chamber, where the corporation hold their courts, and transact private business, it is also used for assembling the grand jury in, both at the assizes, and the quarter sessions. The portraits of some of the principal benefactors to the town, are preserved in this room; among them are:

Sir Thomas White, in a scarlet gown, faced with fur, and sur-mounted by a gold chain; the inscription on the frame calls him, "A worthy benefactor, who

* The former edifice was disfigured by a row of massive pillars, supporting heavy pointed arches, which, extending along the centre, through the whole length of the hall, divided it into two parts; thereby rendering it very unfit for the purposes for which it was intended. and had therefore, been frequently complained of by the judges who occasionally held the assizes in it." Mr. Coates dates the re-building of the Town Hall on its old site, a year earlier than Mr. Man, whose authority we have preferred above.

gave to this towne of Reading, and to twenty-three other cities and towns, every twenty-fourth year, £124: more to this towne he gave two fellowships in St. John Bap. college in Oxford, for ever."

Sir Thomas Rich: a kit-cat size, representing him with strait hair, mustachios, a *royale*, and falling band.

Mr. Aldworth: a full length, in a black official dress; on his left is a scull upon a table with the words *Mors Mihi Salus* inscribed on it; his right hand is supported by a book on another table, near which is a globe sur-mounted by a figure of the Virgin Mary.

Archbishop Laud, with this inscription.

To the memory of Dr. William Laud, Arch Bishop of Cant; who was a Liberal Benefactor to this Town, which was honored with his Birth:

After he had many years served the Church, under the Defender of the Faith; King James, and King Charles the Martyr:

He was solemnly murdered by a faction of Rebels, Upon Tower-hill, London, the 10th day of January.

A. D. MDCXLIII, *Ætatis suae* LXXIIII.

The gift of Dr. Peter Mews. Vicar of St. Maries Reading, and Arch Deacon of Berks, 1667.

Mr. John Kendrick, a three quarter length, in a black dress, short hair, small band, and hand and neck ruffs. The picture is surrounded by Latin inscriptions, which, however, contain nothing sufficiently remarkable in them, for their number, to induce us to transcribe them.

THE DISPENSARY.

This most useful institution is situated in Chain-lane, in a house now the property of the corporation, and which was formerly occupied by the Blue-coat School. Its advantages are extended to all the poor who stand in need of relief, but are unable to pay for its being afforded them; they are supplied here, not only with advice, but with medicine, *gratis*, under the direction of some of the professional gentlemen of the town, who give their attendance daily, for that benevolent purpose. Since its establishment, in 1802, up to the last day of December 1832, the total number of patients admitted, amounted to 17,659; the ex-

pences incurred by the committee of directors in the management of this institution are defrayed by voluntary subscriptions, of which there was received, in the year, 1832, the sum of £168 10s. 0d.; the total amount of receipts for the same year, including a balance of £13 15s. 7d. of the year preceding, dividends on stock, &c. was £335 0s. 7d.; out of which £55 11s. 0d. were paid for drugs; and on various other charges being defrayed, including those for salary to an officer of the establishment, surgical instruments, and repairs; printing, advertising, and stationery; insurance, rent, coals, &c. &c. there was a balance left in hand of £55 0s. 7d., which does not amount to a sum sufficient for paying for one years supply of drugs, and which shows how very nearly the disbursements equal the receipts. The following general statement of Reading Dispensary for two years, 1831 and 1832, will at once point out the utility and efficiency of this institution, and show how well worthy it is of the contributions of those benevolent persons who are disposed to alleviate the miseries of their poorer fellow creatures, by supporting an establishment which only requires that support to enable it in a yet more extended degree to restore health to the sick, and to relieve the pains of the afflicted.

GENERAL STATEMENT for 1831.

Aggregate number of patients admitted	-	-	-	784
Cured	-	-	-	618
Relieved	-	-	-	56
Irregular	-	-	-	10
Sent to parishes	-	-	-	6
Died	-	-	-	12
Remain on the Books	-	-	-	82
Vaccinated	-	130.	-	784

GENERAL STATEMENT for 1832.

Aggregate number of patients admitted	-	-	-	656
Of which there have been cured	-	-	-	501
Relieved	-	-	-	49
Irregular	-	-	-	7
Sent to parishes	-	-	-	8
Died	-	-	-	21
Remain on the books	-	-	-	70
Vaccinated this year, 64.	Total number vaccinated	-	-	330

The following is a list of donations presented to the institution:—

		£	s.	d.
1802	Mr. Thornton's produce of two plays -	21	6	0
1804	Officers of the Oxford Volunteers -	31	10	0
1807	Dr. Valpy's profits of a Greek play -	12	13	0
1812	Mr. Binfield's music meeting -	37	5	0
—	E. Simeon, Esq. (legacy) -	189	0	0
1818	Dr. Valpy's profits of a play -	72	10	10
1820	Mrs. Sarah Haggard's legacy -	5	0	0
—	Mrs. Oliver -	5	0	0
—	M. Annersley, Esq. (legacy) -	25	0	0
1825	Mrs. Thorpe's legacy -	19	19	0
1826	Mr. Briscoe's legacy -	20	0	0
—	Rev. W. H. Woodroffe's legacy, (3 per cent.) Thos. Ring, Esq.; John May, Esq.; and P. W. French, Esq.; executors -	1350	0	0
1827	Profits of Dr. Valpy's Greek play -	40	5	11
1833	Mrs. Walsham's legacy -	10	0	0

THE COUNTY GAOL.

The gaol, placed very conspicuously among the ruins of the abbey, was erected in 1793. The north wing is built on the spot which was formerly the cemetery of the abbey church; and, on digging the foundation for that part, several human skeletons were discovered, which, from the various depths below the surface at which they were found deposited, are supposed to have been hastily interred; the bones and teeth also were in a perfect state, and from the connection of these facts, it is imagined that the remains were those of a part of Essex's army who fell victims to an epidemic fever which proved very fatal to his forces, and which caused him to defer the preparations he was then making, in 1643, for undertaking the siege of Oxford. The workmen made some further discoveries in the course of their proceedings for clearing a space for the foundation; among others, were some counters, called abbey-pieces, and a six-pence of the reign of Henry VIII., with the face in profile, and a port-cullis for the mint mark, shewing it was coined at Westminster; the principal discovery, however, was that of Queen Adeliza's hand, or, at least, an interesting relic so called, which has been presented to the Philosophical Institution, where it

may be seen, our readers will also find a description of it in our notice of the varied contents of the Museum attached to that Institution, to which we refer them. The length of this prison is 163 feet 6 inches in front, and 137 feet 6 inches in depth; it has been considerably enlarged since the period of its erection, at which time it had not room for more than forty prisoners; but it can now receive a hundred and twenty-four; at times of excitement and riot, as many as two hundred and fifty have been contained within the walls, but with very great inconvenience. The keeper's house is very commodious; there is also within the building, a room for the reception of the magistrates, a neat chapel, an infirmary, a few cells for the refractory, some solitary cells, and a bath and fumigating room. The prisoners are divided, according to their sex, each inhabiting a separate wing of the building, which is divided into several wards, where there are day rooms for labour, and other apartments; and between the inner and outer wall, there is a large space set apart for walking and other exercises; on the tread wheel each prisoner walks at the rate of 13000 feet in ascent, per day of ten hours. During the present year (1833) the magistrates have considerably enlarged the yard at the back of the gaol, in which they have built a boys' ward with an hospital for the sick prisoners over it. The expences of these improvements were partly defrayed by a sum of £1000 bequeathed for that benevolent purpose, by the late A. Shutz, Esq.

Cost of the maintenance of Prisoners for three months.

						£	s.	d.
Bread	-	-	-	-	-	141	17	0
Oatmeal	-	-	-	-	-	19	12	0
Meat	-	-	-	-	-	34	14	0
Salt	-	-	-	-	-	1	6	0
Vegetables	-	-	-	-	-	13	11	6
Fuel, &c.*	-	-	-	-	-	61	10	0

* Mrs. Deane left, among many other charities. the interest of £150 to be applied in purchasing fuel for the use of the prisoners in the county gaol; with this legacy, bequeathed in 1787, the sum of £156 17s. 3d., was purchased in the 4 per cents; the dividend on which sum amounts to £6 5s. 6d.

	£	s.	d.
Sick Prisoners - - - -	26	2	6
Clothing - - - - -	34	6	4
Incidentals - - - - -	76	15	11
Conveyance of Prisoners - - - -	71	2	6
Discharged Prisoners - - - -	8	8	6
	<hr/>		
	£489	6	3

The cost of New Works during the above period amounted to £250 0s. 0d., and the expence of repairs, during the same space of time, was £85 8s. 0d. The officers attached to the gaol are a Chaplain, and Gaoler, who receive salaries of £200 per annum; a Surgeon, who receives annually £70, and a Turnkey, and Matron, who are paid yearley, the former £52, and the latter £52 10s. 0d., it will be thus seen that the total expences of the county prison during the period we have named, amounted to the large sum of £968 6s. 9d. viz:—

	£	s.	d.
New Works - - - - -	250	0	0
Repairs - - - - -	85	8	0
Maintenance of Prisoners - - - -	489	6	3
Quarterly Salaries - - - - -	143	12	6
	<hr/>		
	£968	6	9

GENERAL VIEW OF THE TOWN.

Reading, the county town of Berkshire, is situated in 51° 25' N. Latitude, and 0° 38' W. Longitude; it is bounded, on the north, by the Thames, which divides it from Oxfordshire; on the south, by the hamlets of Whitley and Southcott; on the east, by the parish of Sonning; and on the west, by the parish of Tilehurst. There is no proof that it was the *Pontes* of the ancients, as mentioned by Leland; the absence of all Roman remains, whether of roads, buildings, or coins, is sufficient of itself to overthrow that conjecture, if it were not already destroyed by the fact that the alleged distance of Pontes and the actual distance of Reading from the metropolis, differ too materially to allow of the supposition of their occupying the same site. The Rev. Thomas Reynolds, in his edition of the *Itineraries* of Antoninus and Richard of Cirencester, fixes on this town as occupying the spot where formerly stood the Roman town *Calleva*, but this opinion is only supported by repeated cor-

rections of distances in the different Iters where *Callera* is mentioned, and is refuted by the same objections we have just instanced in the case of Pontes. There can be but little doubt that Reading was founded by the Saxons, and it is probably indebted, not indeed for its beginning, for there is proof of its existing anterior to the period we are about to mention, but for its subsequent importance, to Elfrida, the mother of St. Edward the Martyr, who built a convent for nuns, in the tenth century on the site now occupied by the parish church of St. Mary, and which was soon after destroyed by the Danes, who cruelly murdered the religious inmates. It has been thought that the female heads on the corporation seal, refer to this foundation; these heads are in saltire, on a field azure. and the middle one, is crowned, with the initials E. R. introduced in compliment to Queen Elizabeth, who frequently resided here, and to whom the town, generally, and the corporation in particular, were deeply indebted for various acts of munificence and condescension. Whether such be the origin of the arms or not we have no means of ascertaining; the nunnery, however, that they are supposed to allude to, shared but in the general destruction of the town by the same enemy, and was longer in recovering its former consequence; during the reign of William I., it still remained in ruins,* while the town itself con-

* This house, the establishment of which was a penitential act of the Queen Elfrida, was finally suppressed by Henry I., who gave the land to the Abbey; it was one of the three religious houses founded by that queen, in expiation of the enormities of a pretty long life; the second was in the county of Southampton, or in Wiltshire; and the third at Harewood, in Yorkshire; the last was erected on the spot where her seducer Athelwold was slain by the outraged King Edgar. They who have visited the domain of the Earl of Harewood, will remember an open space of about one acre, in the centre of a thick wood, and about half a mile west of the picturesque ruins of the old castle, which still retains the name of Ghesne-plain, or the space in the wood; and to which tradition points as the scene of the murder, and the site of the nunnery. "The Kynge," says Higden, in his Polichronicon, "had the erle with hym, for to hunt in the wode of Wer-welley, (Wharf-vale) that is now called Hoore Wade. (Harewood) There the kynge smote him through wyth a shafte."

sisted, at the Norman conquest, of nothing more than a few dilapidated houses, insufficient in themselves to give it claim to a title which it formerly possessed, and which its ruins retained.

During the two succeeding reigns, however, of William Rufus and Henry I. it must have increased rapidly; but this progressive prosperity was suddenly checked by the turbulent state of the times, and the savage violence that characterized the eighteen years dominion of the usurper Stephen. The followers of the latter king took refuge in Reading, and induced the inhabitants to hold out against the Empress Matilda; for which opposition to his mother's title Henry II., on taking possession of the town, entirely demolished the castle which had been erected here by Stephen, in defence of his claim. The situation of this castle has been much disputed, and many have supposed that the town possessed two at the same time, an opinion, however, which cannot be supported by any evidence beyond conjecture. Leland says that a castle existed here in the time of the Saxons; but he could not learn its situation, and was unable to decide whether, according to tradition, its site was at the west end of Castle-street, near the ancient place of execution, or on the tract of land occupied by the Abbey. As there is nothing to prove the co-existence here of two castles, so is there as little available proof of there ever having existed any built by the Saxons, or that there was ever one at all situated at the west end of the street, the name of which is supposed to be a record of the fact. Two instances have been cited to demonstrate the improbability of the Saxons having been the founders of the building in question: one is, that they were never in the habit of erecting castles to defend their possessions, and the other, that Reading could not have been of sufficient consequence in their time to have required such a security. The commanding situation of the west end of Castle-street probably suggested the idea of its having been occupied by a military work. The position is undeniably a fine one, but in the absence of any other proof than what can be drawn from this casual circumstance, we

cannot believe that the castle stood on this side of the town; and with regard to the derivation of the name of one of the streets, we are inclined to agree with the suggestion that it was so named after some inn in the vicinity, a suggestion the more probable when it is recollected that several known instances of the same derivation of the names of streets occur even in this town.

The commonest reader does not require to be told that the period of Stephen was the great castle-building age of English history; eleven hundred fortresses are said to have been erected in this one reign, by the barons; and Stephen himself raised no less than one hundred and fifteen in defence of his unjust and disputed title. We entertain little doubt that the castle, of the real existence of which in this town there is historical evidence, and which was destroyed by the young hope of the Plantagenets, was one of the buildings erected for the purpose we have above mentioned by Stephen, and that it was situated within the confines of the Abbey, but not, as conjectured by Leland, upon the site of that structure. Mr. Man, who displayed great zeal and industry in his researches to discover the precise spot upon which the castle stood, was induced to believe, after much consideration, that it was erected on the South East corner of the Forbury, near Blake's bridge, where he found some ruins in a very dilapidated state, but which, he thought, bore evidence of having been intended for a place of defence. This spot, near the river, is at such a distance from the Abbey; that, though within its precincts, it must have been an entirely distinct building. The ruinous state of the structure, (and it no longer bears the appearance presented in the plate published by Mr. Man) rendered the tracing of its original form a work of difficulty, but it was conjectured to have been a square building with projecting towers at the four corners, of about fifty feet in height, and so well placed as to entirely command the river and the bridge, which was the only entrance to the Abbey, on that side of the town. It is impossible, however, still to state with any degree

of certainty that this spot was the site of the castle destroyed by Henry; and there is nothing to shew that the ruins were not the work of a later age than Stephen of Blois. Cooke, that indefatigable compiler of topographical works, mentions the existence of traces of two bastions near the ruins of the Abbey, but, he adds, that they were known to be modern, by their figure, and suggests their having been probably constructed during the civil war in Charles the First's time, and destroyed at the revolution. Thus the site of this celebrated castle may still remain matter of dispute, though there can be none of its having existed, and indeed little of its having been situated on the abbey side of the town; all vestiges of it may be said to have disappeared, and its destruction seems to have been too complete to make even the preservation of its ruins a matter of interest. It was long a favourite employment with our forefathers, (and one which had to do with the affections) to arrest the hand of time, that was gradually and silently destroying these mute yet eloquent records of a by-gone age; and, at least, to check the course of ruin, even though they could not repair it; where, indeed, the latter was possible, the old edifices were converted into modern residences, while a strict and reverential regard was observed in the preservation of their ancient forms and figures. It was any thing but a Gothic taste that inspired the spirit of adapting the crumbling holds of feudal lords and palsy monks, to the purposes of modern refinement; *we*, at all events, have little cause to complain, as it is to this spirit we owe the existence of many of the most noble structures, thus preserved, or thus adapted, which lend an additional beauty to many of the picturesque portions of our country. The castle and abbey of Reading have been less fortunate, one has perished, the other is fast disappearing, and to neither can we apply the lines which have served to illustrate one of the remains of the stirring times of sovereign abbots and reiving earls:

The pile that frowned
In conscious strength of arch and tower,
On flood and field, on all around,

Q

On warrior's keep and lady's bower,
 Stands unsubdued, in pride of age,
 Its beauty mellowed, not all flown.

Like summer years of matron sage,
 Where Love may yet build up his throne,
 Its frowns erased, in mildness bland,
 It rears a head that Time has spared,
 Or touched but light, as though his hand
 To press upon it had not dared.*

The division of the town into wards is of very ancient origin, and still continues, with a constable appointed to each ward, the extent of which is thus regulated. *High Ward* includes Duke-street, King-street, the Market Place, Friar-street, Vastern Lane, Hog Lane, Cross-street, &c. *New Ward* contains Butcher Row, Fisher Row, Broad-street, Chain Lane, the Forbury, and the Wharf on the North side of the Kennet. In *Minster Ward* are Gun-street, Castle-street, Pigmy Lane, Minster-street, and St. Mary's church yard. *Old Ward* comprises Southampton-street, Horn-street, Seven Bridges, St. Mary's Butts, West-street, Hosier's Lane, Russell-street, &c. and in *London Ward* are London-street, Mill Lane, Church Lane, St. Giles's church yard, Silver-street, Ort Lane, and the Wharfs on the South side of the Kennet. In 1080, when Domesday Book was compiled, the number of hugas or houses constituting the town of Reading did not exceed 28, and Mr. Coates, who favours the hypothesis of a fortified work having existed at the Western extremity of the town, thinks it probable that these houses were situated in the immediate neighbourhood of the "arx or castle in Castle-street." The number of houses continued to increase after the foundation of the Abbey, in 1126, shortly subsequent to which event buildings were erected in its vicinity; in 1134, in a deed about the time of the second abbot Anscherius, mention is made of the *Soteria* or Shoemaker's Row, on the East side of the Market Place, which is said "to be near the Abbey wall;" from this point the buildings extended westward; in 1308, we find Duke Street or *Novus Vicus*, as it was then called,

* Lines on Lacock Abbey, county of Wilts.

and between that period and 1335 there arose London Street, High street, Minster Street, High Bridge, Tothill (near the gateway of the George Inn) and the Drapery or Cloth Market, opposite to it. In deeds dated about this period, we also find Sonkere, Sinkere, or Le Sinker Street, subsequently called Siveyer Street, and now Silver Street. The name of Minster Street may either refer to its being the street leading to the monastery, through what is now the Saracen's Head Inn, or more probably to the adjacent Minster Church of St. Mary. We have mentioned, in another part of this work, that Siveyer street was so named from its being occupied by the sieve makers, but Coates notices another derivation from the name of a family who held possessions in Reading in 1458, of which this street may have formed part; the name of "Rose, daughter of Richard Seaver" appears in the register of the parish of St. Lawrence for the year 1686.

The following list will show the ancient and present appellations of the streets which have, at various periods, changed their names:

New Street, <i>now called</i> -	Friar Street
Chapel Hill, Town's End -	Friar's Place
Old Street - - -	Horn street
Wade Street - - -	St. Mary's Butts
Lurkman Lane - - -	Hosiers' Lane
Cattle's Grove Lane -	Kate's Grove Lane
Orte Lane - - -	New Street and Albion Place
The Ortes, or Abbey Lane	Watlington Lane
Orte Bridge - - -	Blake's Bridge
Town Ortes - - -	Boult's Wharf
Budden Lane - - -	Red Lane
Sievyer street - - -	Silver street
Tute Hill, Tothill - -	North End of Minster street
Yield or Guild Hall - -	Hill Hall
Sun Lane - - -	King Street
Ox Street - - -	Butcher's Row
Cheese Row and Fish Row *	Fisher Row

* Before the cheese fair was removed to the Forbury, it was held in this street, and all the cheese sold was obliged to be weighed in the town—scales kept in the wool-hall. This street was also appropriated to the sale of fish and gardenage, as appears from the following order, made by the corporation, in the 31st of Queen Elizabeth:

Rotten Row	-	-	-	West Street
Shoemaker's Row	-	-	-	East Side of Market Place
The Sanctuary	-	-	-	South Side of Crown Lane
Gutter Lane, or Potters' Lane	-	-	-	Cross Street
Hythe Bridge	-	-	-	High Bridge
Back Lane	-	-	-	East street

In 1233, the year in which the Friary was erected, there were very few houses near it; but before the year 1347, all the ancient streets named in the above list had been founded, and some of them were of a much remoter date. In 1610 the town occupied very nearly the same space of ground that it now does, so that in mere extent Reading has not much increased since that period, but the number of its houses is more than ten times as great; every street now consists of its regular and undivided lines of houses, while, at the time Speed's map was taken (1610) Vastern-lane, Boarded-lane, Pigmy-lane, Kate's Grove-lane, Church-street, East-street, with great part of West-street. Seven Bridges, Horn-street, Southamptou-street, and Cross-street, besides most of the courts and entries, were then only partially built on. The middle row of houses, between the Pump and the Cage (or Compter Prison), as they appear in Speed's Plan of Reading, were taken down in 1613, according to Mr. Blagrave's will, and as the prosperity of the town continued to increase, the inhabitants began to attend to its improvement, which appears to have been neglected since the alterations effected in accordance with the will of the gentleman above named. In 1760, Mr. John Richards, an eminent draper, and alderman of the borough, purchased a row of houses which had long divided the present King-street into two lanes, called Sun-lane and Back-lane, which he pulled down, and converted the site into one open street for the benefit of the public. The new street received the appellation which it now bears in honour of the

"It is this day agreed, by the company present, that all kind of boatmen as do use this town, shall bring all kind of fish, which they do bring, into the Cheese-rewe, alias Fish-rewe, except it be all shell fish, and as for roots, onions and such like, they maie sell them in their boate, paying toll therefore."

accession of George III. who ascended the throne of the United Kingdom in the year above mentioned. It has been very justly remarked that if this improvement had been extended by taking down the houses which separate Butcher-row and Fisher-row, the communication between the western parts of the town and the market-place would have been rendered much more convenient than it now is; the truth of the remark is self evident, and the necessity of the alteration seems to have been apparent at so early a date, that it is said Archbishop Laud had projected a plan not only for the improvement afterwards effected by Mr. Richards, but also for throwing open Butcher Row and Fisher Row into one street, and for considerably extending and beautifying Broad Street, in which he was born.

In 1550 the town was paved with flints and round pebbles, which rendered the streets, though of themselves broad and stately, very inconvenient to foot passengers. Dr. Lloyd, in a letter dated 1641, and addressed to Dr. Bayly, president of St. John's, recommends the latter to make application to Archbishop Laud for permission to expend the fines, from one of his Grace's benefactions, every eighth year, upon pitching the streets with stone, and in repairing the bridge and adjacent highways; adding his assurance that the inhabitants would retain a more sensible and sweeter savour of the archbishop's munificence from this permission than from all other liberality. The application however was either never made, or, if so, was unsuccessful, for the streets remained for many years in a ruinous state, from the negligent manner in which they were generally repaired; each inhabitant was obliged to keep in repair so much of the pitching before his house as extended from his door to the kennel which divided the street in the middle; the consequence was, that every householder being permitted to follow his own fancy as to the way of keeping his allotted space in repair, and no two householders being ever found to agree in their methods, the streets were rendered both inconvenient and unhealthy; inconvenient from the unevenness of

of the pitching, as well as dangerous and incommodious at night from the posts, rails, and trees, dispersed over them; impassable too in heavy rains, when the one central kennel became of course flooded; and unhealthy from the stagnated waters which collected in the hollows, caused by the neglect of observing a true level. To remedy these inconveniences, a bill was brought into parliament, in 1784*, "for paving, watching, and lighting the Town of Reading," and which, notwithstanding all the advantages to be derived from it, met with much apparently inexplicable opposition, which, though it did not succeed in defeating the measure, materially encreased the expences of carrying it, safely and securely, into effect; the inhabitants are indebted for all the advantages and comfort which this improvement has conferred upon the town, to the persevering efforts of John Deane, Esq., who was Mayor of the borough, at the period of the introduction of the bill into the House of Commons. The act of parliament which was thus procured, authorised the Commissioners to assess the houses of all the occupiers within the borough, at the following rate:—sixpence in the pound for all houses, the rents whereof amounted to not less than five pounds per annum, and did not exceed twenty:—nine-pence in the pounds for all houses above twenty pounds per annum, and under forty:—and one shilling in the pound for all houses of which the occupiers paid a higher yearly rental than forty pounds. Instead of waiting for the slow progress of raising the rates before commencing the work, (a proceeding

* The high roads leading into the town had been greatly improved in the earlier part of the century mentioned above, previous to which they had been during a long course of years almost impassable; so much so, indeed, that "nearly within the limits of the borough, a single carriage could seldom proceed on its journey, until others came up to its assistance." The whole western line between London and Bath remained in the same disagreeable state till the evil was remedied by the formation of turnpike roads, a few years before which, the journey between those two places, in unfavourable weather, required as much time as it now takes to perform the journey between the metropolis and Edinburgh.

which would have defeated the ends of the bill) the Commissioners raised the money necessary to carry their measures into effect, by borrowing eight hundred pounds on two lives at the rate of ten per cent, but this amount raised by life annuities being found insufficient for the purpose, a further sum of one thousand pounds was borrowed, by a voluntary loan, free of interest. By the aid of these sums, the useful work was completed, in a very short time; the first stone was laid, on the first of August, 1785, on which day a numerous body of the friends to the bill, went in procession to the house of the Mayor, John Deane, Esq., in Castle street, and in compliment to that gentleman, by whose exertions the act had been procured, the first stone was laid before his house, with the following inscription.

“By virtue of an act passed this present Session, in the 25th year of the reign of His Majesty, King George the Third, for paving this borough, this first stone was laid, the 8th day of August, 1785,

John Deane, Esq., Mayor.”

*Nimis aspera sano levabit cultu
Oppidi cultus officium magistratus.*

J. F. Hill, Mason.

The Town has greatly improved, under the powers granted by this act, though the rate levied in order to enable the Commissioners to keep the borough clean, properly paved, and well-lit, was long and strenuously resisted; in 1794, application was made to parliament for a Sunday Toll, to lessen the tax on the inhabitants of Reading for paving, lighting, and watching the town, but it was not attended with success, and has not, we believe, been repeated. The town is now lit with gas;* by the provisions of the act above named, the process of lighting was by lamps furnished with oil, and which were suspended in front of the houses, at due intervals of space, from Michaelmas to Lady Day; before the period of the bill, the streets were never regularly, and consequently always ill-lighted; at what time lights were first introduced here, at all,

* The Town was first lit with gas in the year 1819.

is not known, but from the following entry in the Corporation Diary, dated 1656, it is clear it could not have been previous to that year: "upon the petition of Richard Riddett, Bellman, agreed that he be allowed ten shillings for his pains in warning the inhabitants to hang out lanthorns, and candles, in the dark nights."

SUPPLY OF WATER.

The town is supplied with water from the river Kennet, by pipes, which communicate with a reservoir in Broad-street, and also from several wells which have been opened in various streets, and it is remarkable that those wells, which are situated near the above river, rise and fall with the Thames which is at a much greater distance from them. It is supposed, from this circumstance, that the bed of the Thames is much lower than that of the Kennet, and detaches its springs under the bed of the latter; this is possibly true for the bed of the Kennet, in its passage through the town, is formed of hard impervious clay, while that of the Thames consists of chalk, a material which readily imbibes water, and in digging for wells here it has been found necessary to penetrate this substratum of chalk, before water could be procured. That the Thames, however, does not form the only source from whence the wells are supplied, is proved by the difference in the qualities of the springs in various parts of the town. At the Bridewell, the water is so corrosive that in the space of twelve years, it perforated the cistern like a sieve, three or four times; this hard quality of the water, in a greater, or less degree is observable in all the wells on the north sides of Friar-street, Broad-street, Minster-street, and Castle-street, and also on the more elevated half of the opposite side of the latter street, while on the lower half, and on the south sides of all the above streets, and in Gun-street, the water in the wells is so free from every corrosive matter, that it has not been found requisite to repair the leaden pipes for a whole century; as this increased degree of softness is found in the springs the nearer they approach the Kennet, it is probably derived from that river, the quality of which partakes of the soil over

which it flows; from its source to the point where, after passing through Reading, it unites its waters with the Thames, the Kennet runs over a soil composed of peat and vegetable matter, or stiff clay, the great predominance of the former is sufficient to render the water soft, while the chalky substratum of the Thames, abounding, as it does, with sulphate of lime, is supposed to impregnate the water with the corrosive quality it possesses; and which, rendering it unfit for many domestic purposes, induced some spirited persons to erect works to obtain a more abundant supply from the waters of the Kennet, and to distribute it at a small expence to most of the houses in the town. This necessary undertaking was planned in 1694, and, two years after, the mayor and corporation granted to Ambrose Crawley, Daniel Dennell, Edward Dyson, and Richard Lowbridge, the lease of a piece of land near the Kennet, called Brownhill, for a thousand years, at the yearly rent of five shillings, to erect their engine house; and in the following year the same persons obtained a lease from George Blagrove, Esq., of a piece of land, near the mills in St. Giles's parish, called Mill Orchard; with liberty of taking a sufficient quantity of water out of the Kennet, not exceeding 100 square inches, (for the purpose of turning the water wheel) at the annual rent of £8 for a thousand years. The supply thus raised from the small and imperfect engine was, for a long space of time, very inadequate to the necessities of the town; the managers were void of skill, the works were not kept in repair, through a deficiency of funds, and were daily becoming more inefficient, through the neglect of those who held proprietorships, and who had acquired the little interest they possessed in the concern, from having purchased, at a low price, the original large shares, which had been subdivided and sold to various individuals, many of whom did not reside in the town. This disgraceful state of the water-supply continued till the commencement of the present century, when the principal shares were purchased by two gentlemen of the place, who erected a very superior engine, on an improved principle, and who are enabled to supply

the most distant and highest parts of the town with water, and with so great a degree of certainty, that it is seldom interrupted, except at periods of high floods, or severe frosts.

INLAND NAVIGATION.

The Kennett, which enters Berkshire at Hungerford, was rendered navigable from Newbury to Reading in the year 1716; the bill that was brought into parliament, previous to the measure being effected, met with great opposition from various parties in the town; the inhabitants generally taking every means to obstruct its progress through the house, from the persuasion that the change would materially affect, if not entirely ruin their trade; the corporation opposed it, under the plea of supposed danger to the several bridges: and the proprietors of the water works and mills, and the owners of the wharfs also resisted the innovation, and prayed to be heard by counsel at the bar of the house, against the bill; which notwithstanding the zealous efforts of its adversaries, passed the Commons on the 13th of August, and received the royal assent shortly after. The powers however which were thus granted to the commissioners for improving the navigation of the Kennett, were found to be inadequate for the purpose; but they were considerably enlarged by a new bill obtained in 1720, and which passed the house without meeting with any opposition from this borough. The carrying this measure into effect has not been attended with any of those disastrous results to the trade of the town, which were at first foretold,* but, on the contrary, has been rather

* "The extensive tract of inland navigation, now opened, which is daily extending itself through the kingdom; has increased the trade of Reading to a very considerable degree. From the centre of Wiltshire to Reading there is now a navigation of 34 miles, affording on the one hand, by means of the Thames, an introduction for the various articles of merchandize from London and Oxford, where the communication with Birmingham, and the potteries in Staffordshire, is regular and expeditious, and a ready market for peat, peat-ashes and coals. On the other hand, it facilitates the exportation of cheese, the great staple of North Wiltshire: the price of carriage of that

beneficial than otherwise to the general interests of the place; what trifling loss may have been sustained at the period of this extension of the navigation, has been compensated for by a new influx of trade, arising from the communication now opened with Bath and Bristol, and the north-west parts of the kingdom, by means of the Kennett and Avon canal; and the principal articles derived from this channel of communication at present are Bath free-stone and Somersetshire pit coals, which have been introduced here in considerable quantities. The productions of

“The Kennett swift, for silver eels renowned,”

are, besides that fish, pike, cray fish, chub, roach, and dace; barbel is caught in it as far west as Newbury, and it also produces, very near this town, trout of a very delicate flavour; some have been taken measuring forty-five inches in length, and weighing more than fifteen pounds.* From the High Bridge to its junction with the Thames, the Kennett, by authority of parliament, is placed under the controul of the Thames Commissioners: the navigation above the High Bridge is very intricate and dangerous, but it has been much improved below that by the cutting and erecting a canal and pound lock. The High Bridge was formerly of wood, but the corporation took down the old struc-

article from Hungerford, being now only 20s. per ton, little more than one third of the price by land carriage. By this line of navigation is conveyed chalk for manure, clay and flints for the potteries in Staffordshire, besides the various heavy articles brought from Wales, through Bristol, for London;” and the facilities have encreased, with a corresponding diminution in the expence of carriage, since the above was written by Mr. Coates.

* “On the first of November, 1755, being the same day on which the city of Lisbon was destroyed by an earthquake, a remarkable agitation was perceived here, in the waters of the Kennet, whether this phenomenon was at all connected with that melancholy event, would be difficult to ascertain, but from the coincidence of time, and from the like agitation having been perceived in Plymouth on the same day such a connection seems by no means improbable.”

Philosophical Transactions, quoted in Man's Reading.

ture in 1787, and erected the present elegant stone one, of a simple arch, with handsome balustrades, over the same part of the river, between Duke Street and London street, at a considerable expence. A new iron bridge has also been recently erected over the river, on the new line of the great western road,* and the stream is now rendered navigable for all vessels not exceeding 128 tons burden. Till a very late period, Reading was very deficient in the possession of large and convenient wharfs, and without which, the advantages arising from water carriage are considerably decreased in value. The few places here for landing goods, except the wharfs held by tenants of the Crown lands, were never of any great magnitude, till within these few years, when a very commodious wharf and dock were constructed. This desirable improvement was completed in 1828, and has, we believe, been attended with all the favourable results that were anticipated at the period of the first projection of the scheme.

From the reign of Edward VII. to that of Charles I. the freemen of the town possessed the privilege of landing all their goods, wharfage free, at a particular spot near the High Bridge, called the Common Landing Place. This wharf was under the jurisdiction of the corporation, at whose expence it was kept in repair, and who received in return the wharf duties on all articles landed there, which were not the property of burgesses of the town. How this right became lost to the inhabitants is not known, but it is supposed to have fallen into disuse during the confusions caused by the civil wars. Mr. Man thinks that in point of equity it might still be supposed to exist, as the inhabitants do not appear ever to have formally surrendered the privilege, but merely to have discontinued it during turbulent times, and afterwards to

* The following inscription is on a square tablet of stone, inserted in the brick work, on one side of the bridge :—

“This bridge was erected at the expence of the Crown; the site thereof being determined by the Commissioners for the Thames navigation.” The year in which the bridge was completed, 1832, is inscribed on the iron work, beneath.

have forgotten it altogether. The following agreement made between the citizens of London and the burgesses of Reading, shews that they were possessed of another privilege in ancient times, not less useful in its way than the one we have just mentioned, but considerably more singular—that of being exempt from the payment of tolls in the metropolis.

“In the court in the interior chamber of the Guildhall of the city of London, held on the fifth day of July, in the seventh year of the reign of Queen Elizabeth, before those great and respectable men, the lord mayor and aldermen of the said city of London, among other things it was agreed:—

“That all the burgesses of the town of Reading, in the county of Berks, shall, immediately after such time as this court shall be truly certified of their names in writing, under the common seal of their said town, be discharged of toll within this city, according to the ancient allowance of their liberties to them made by this court in their behalf.”

“Blackwell.”

We have already spoken of the Forbury being considered common by the inhabitants, a right which has been always tenaciously asserted by the corporation and inhabitants in general, who do not allow that their prescriptive right of holding fairs in it, and using it as a place of amusement and exercise, is at all affected because this spot, with other of the abbey lands, is let to private individuals, who consider it as freehold. The burgesses held formerly another right of common at Portman's Brook, or Potman's Brook, as it is now erroneously called; the privilege itself has been lost beyond the memory of man, and though the brook is still in existence, it is not known on which side of the road the commonable land was situated. A still popular tradition points out the Vasterns as having formerly belonged to the town's people, and the tradition is supposed to be strengthened by the probable derivation of the word from the old law term, *Vastum*, signifying a waste or common. But it has been conjectured that the place here designated was on the opposite side of the road, and what is now

called Hog Moors; this land is the property of the Corporation, who may have enclosed it, as lords of the soil, in the civil wars, or soon after, a proceeding rendered the more easy from part of the fortifications of the town having been constructed on it, and its importance consequently lessened in the opinion of the inhabitants.

TRADE AND MARKETS.

The trade of Reading with respect to manufactories is no longer considerable. It in some measure owes its present consequence to the woollen trade, established here in the reign of Edward I. There is a legend of somewhat doubtful authority, that Thomas Cole, commonly called the rich clothier of Reading, amassed an immense fortune in the exercise of the above branch of business. He is reported to have maintained 140 married servants, besides 300 poor people whom he set to work; and that "his wains with cloth filled the highway from Reading to London, to the stopping of King Henry I. in his progress, which king gratified Cole with a standard yard, the length of his royal arm; but the truth is, it was the arm of Edward I. which was the adequation of a yard. The whole story is uncertain, yet Cole may be accounted eminent in this kind."* The woollen manufactory was greatly encouraged by Queen Elizabeth, during whose reign it was carried on to an extent never equalled at any preceding period. It continued to increase till the reign of Charles I., but the civil wars of that unhappy age gave a check to its prosperity which was never recovered. It continued gradually to decline till the commencement of the eighteenth century, about which time it was entirely lost. On its extinction, great encouragement was given to the manufacturing of sail cloth, an enterprise which has proved very successful. The material produced here was remarkable for its strength and whiteness, owing to a peculiar process to which the yarn was exposed in boiling, previous to its being woven, and was principally purchased by Government for the use of the

* England's Worthies in Church and State.

navy, and by the East India Company. The number of looms employed here, in this branch alone, amounted to nearly 200, and some of them were capable of weaving cloths six or seven yards wide.

The articles of exportation from this town consist of flour, timber, hoops, bark, wool, corn, malt,* seeds of every description, and linen. The imports include iron, deals, spirits, beer, cheese, grocery, staves, Portland stone, Bath free stone, bricks, hemp, flax, corn, hides, leather, and coals. It will be perceived from the above list that the articles of exportation consist chiefly of the rude produce of the surrounding country, the soil of which, particularly in the neighbourhood of the town, is admirably adapted for the finest sort of wheat, about twenty thousand sacks of flour are annually sent to the metropolis, but this quantity varies according to the fertility of the season; in like manner the uncertainty of the markets affects the seed trade in general; and it depends entirely upon the fertility or deficiency of the crops, whether corn becomes an article of export or import; in favorable seasons great quantities are exported to the metropolis and other places, but at periods of scarcity it is imported in quantities of equally considerable magnitude; the flour mills are chiefly situated in the two streams which branch off from the Kennet, near the town. The trade in malt has much decreased of late years; and the importation of coals from the London market has been very much reduced, owing to the introduction of pit-coal, by the Oxford canal, in boats of 25 tons burthen, previous to which nearly six thousands chaldrons were annually obtained from the metropolis; the whole of the export and import trade, by water carriage, amounts to about fifty thousand tons every year; in addition to which may be reckoned about one hundred tons by land carriage, in which the various road-waggons and coaches are engaged.

* "Some of the barges, in which their malt is sent to London, will carry one thousand or twelve hundred quarters."

Smollett's All Nations.

The two market days are Wednesdays and Saturdays, the former chiefly for the sale of fruit, and the latter principally for corn, (upwards of fifty thousand quarters of which are annually sold) and also for butchers' meat, fruit, butter, eggs, poultry, &c. The corn market consists of a spacious open piece of ground, of an irregular form, one side of which is occupied by the church of St. Lawrence, and the others by shops in which various trades are exercised. The necessary repairs of the market are defrayed by the corporation, for which they exact a toll of one pint out of each sack, for all the corn sold in the market. This toll is farmed on a lease for years; and its value, of course, varies according to the price of the commodity. In the last year of the eighteenth century, which was remarkable for the almost total failure of the crops throughout the kingdom, wheat was sold in this market, though the neighbourhood of Reading had suffered less from the wetness of the season than other districts, at the enormous price of 180s. per quarter, a price which continued gradually increasing till the middle of the month of March of the ensuing year, when it was sold at an average of 195s. per quarter; but prospects of an abundant crop appearing after that period, and expectation being entertained of a general peace, the price began to decline, and had nearly fallen to its usual level before the ensuing year 1802.*

About Michaelmas, when the corn market is at the highest, the number of farmers' waggons, bringing the produce of the country to market is upwards of two hundred per day; some of these return empty, but others carry back stable-dung, ashes, chalk, coals, and

* Edward II. being at Reading, in the year 1314, his officers seized twenty three quarters of oats, belonging to Nicholes At-Oke, of Stratfield Mortimer, for the king's chickens, and as much litter as was valued at thirteen shillings, which he had provided for the reception of his landlord, the bishop of St. Davids. On a petition to parliament, satisfaction was ordered to be made to the owner, the officers having refused to pay either for the litter or the corn. The latter was valued at £3 13s. 4d.—*Lyson's Berkshire*.

various retail articles from the shops. For the more strict enforcement of the tolls it has been enacted, that any persons who are dealers in corn, in the market, and neglect to make a declaration accordingly, to the corn inspector, subject themselves to a penalty of £20 for every calendar month they omit to do so; dealers are also liable to another penalty of the same amount, for each return they neglect to make of corn purchased by them, during the week.

According to the weekly returns of the average quantity and price of the several sorts of grain sold in this market, in the year 1800, the proportions are as follows:—

Species.	Price pr. qr.	Qrs. weekly.	Ann. sale qrs.	Toll per annum.	Value of Corn.	Value of Tolls.
Wheat.	60s.	400	20,800	80 qrs.	£62,400	£240
Barley.	34	350	18,200	70	30,940	119
Oats.	26	120	6,240	24	8,112	35
Beans.	37	110	5,720	22	10,582	40
Peas.	47	70	3,640	15	8,554	30
Total.	204	1050	54,600	211	120,588	464

The following shews the Corn Return for one week, dated Reading, January 22, 1833:—

Species.	Imp. measure Total quant.		Total Amount.			Price per qr. Imp. measure		
	Qrs.	Bus.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
Wheat.	660	2	1921	10	6	2	18	2
Barley.	836	0	1191	10	0	1	8	6
Oats.	182	2	166	16	6	0	18	4
Rye.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Beans.	14	4	28	12	6	1	19	5
Pease.	7	4	14	0	0	1	18	0

Prices of corn in Reading market during the above month:—Wheat, 44s. to 66s; Barley, 25s. to 34s; Oats, 16s. to 23s; Beans, 36s. to 42s. 6d; Peas, 38s; price of Flour 40s. to 45s. per sack.

The provision market is held in a building between the market place and Fisher Row, from both of which places it has an entrance; the building forms a long

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square, half of which is occupied by two ranges of butcher's shops, with a clear space between them, for the convenience of purchasers; and the other half is allotted for the use of the market women, who come here with various articles of produce; and the whole is covered with a light roof supported by pillars. The fishmongers' and hucksters' stalls are in a square, open area at the south end of the building, near which is a portico, enclosed with iron gates, and over it, supported on stone columns is the residence of the clerk of the market, who is generally one of the sergeants at mace; the tolls for the use of the stalls, and the rents of the butcher's shops are received by the corporation; who also receive the toll of the weekly market for store pigs, situated between Friar-street and Broad-street, with a communication opening into each; the usual stallage toll is all the advantage that the corporation derives from this market, the ground being private property.

FAIRS.

There are four fairs held here during the year; viz: three on the following days: the 2nd of February, 1st of May, and 25th of July, chiefly for the sale of horses and cows; the latter was originally established by a charter of Henry II, and ordered to commence and be kept during one whole day of the festival of St. James the Apostle, and the three days following. The last and principal fair of the year is held on the 21st and 22nd of September, when from three to five hundred tons of cheese are brought from Gloucestershire, Wiltshire, and other dairy counties; and large quantities of birch brooms are frequently taken by the carters on their return, and disposed of in the different towns they pass through on their way home; this fair is also a statute one for the hiring of male and female servants. Previous to the year 1697, the cheese fair was held in Fisher's Row, then called Cheese Row, and a person was appointed by the corporation for the purpose of weighing, in the adjoining wool hall, all the cheese that was sold; it was subsequent to the above year, ordered to be kept in the Forbury, on account

of the old spot being found two confined to receive all the cheese that was brought, and generally inconvenient both to the buyers and sellers. The following command was issued at the time: "ordered that the next St Matthew's fair be kept at the west end of the Forbury, from the path leading towards the king's meadow, for the selling of cheese and hops; St. Lawrence's church walk for the servants, and the town hall for the serges" Neither hops nor serges have been sold at this fair for many years; it is supposed that the latter declined with the woollen manufactures of the town; it is, however, still attended by a few clothiers from the west of England. In addition to these, there is also a cattle market held every Monday morning, where a large show of fine cattle may be seen, which are on their way to Smithfield, from the western parts of the country; to prevent forestalling, and for the convenience of the inhabitants, the market hours are regulated by the mayor for the time being; they commence at eight in the summer season, and an hour later during winter.

PRIVILEGES MUNICIPAL AND PAROCHIAL.

Reading claims the privilege of a borough by prescription, from the 23rd of Edward I. The right of voting was adjudged, in 1708, to be possessed by freemen who were not paupers, and who had not for two years previous to an election received assistance from any of the town charities, and by the inhabitants paying scot and lot. At the accession of George I, when the partizans of the Stuart dynasty employed their most strenuous efforts to return to parliament as many members as they could who were friends to the cause of the abdicated family, the elections were carried on with great party warmth all over the kingdom, and the contest here was one of the severest ever known. The whig interest was supported by the majority of the middling class of the inhabitants of Reading, while the mob, upheld with more than its usually enlightened zeal, the cause and fortunes of the tory party, which consisted principally of pot-wabblers, an overwhelming multitude resting their right to vote for members to serve in parliament for this borough, upon proving

that they had been accustomed to boil a pot within its limits; the town, on this occasion, is described as having all the appearance of a large camp of gypsies; "fires being lighted in every street and alley, for even lodgers were entitled to this privilege." This zealous majority returned to the first Hanoverian parliament Robert Clarges and Felix Calvert, Esquires, who were elected in opposition to Mr. W. Cadogan, a declared friend to the house of Brunswick. This return, however, was petitioned against by the respectable householders whose claim to exercise the right of voting rested upon a somewhat more worthy foundation than that of their opponents, the pot-wabblers, which was never acknowledged afterwards, for the committee, appointed to take the petition into consideration, having heard all the evidence produced, declared the election null and void, and that the right of voting was solely in the inhabitants paying scot and lot, by whom it has ever since been exercised; the late bill has, however, extended the suffrages of the borough, whose representatives, at present, in the first reformed parliament are Charles Fyshe Palmer and Charles Russell, Esquires.*

The courts held at Reading are those of the Lent Assizes, for the county, and the county quarter sessions, twice a year. The town sessions, also, at which the mayor and recorder preside, are held four times a year, for the judging all offences committed within the limits of the borough, (which, by its charter, is of itself a county) except capital ones; and another court is held every Wednesday,† by the Mayor, called the court of Record, for hearing and settling trivial cases, requiring summary justice, and which are not of sufficient importance to be sent to the quarter sessions; the jurymen, at the latter, are selected from among the inhabitants, but they are exempt from serving on any assize jury, or even on that of the county quarter

* The number of voters was, in 1816, 1060; in 1831, about 1200.

† Except in the weeks of Christmas, Easter, and Pentecost; see the charter of Charles I, page 43.

sessions when they are held in the town, neither do they pay gaol money or county rates. The inhabitants, however, have, for the last century, been called upon to contribute towards the expences incurred by maintaining and prosecuting the borough prisoners, and holding inquests,* but the greater share came from the funds of the corporation, until the end of the year 1830, at the Easter sessions of the following year, the corporate body levied an additional rate for defraying the expences above mentioned; this proceeding met with some opposition, but it was the opinion of counsel that borough parishes cannot resist the demand of corporate bodies thus exercised, and the expences of the quarter sessions will in future be paid by the parish officers out of the poor rates. The demand of an additional rate by the corporation was no voluntary act of that respectable body, but was made at the express interference of government, and in obedience to an act of parliament which distinctly directs that these expences should be collected by the overseers, and paid out of the poor rates.

The dissolution of the religious houses was a heavy misfortune to the poor generally, throughout England, and those of Reading did not escape the pressure of it more than others of their class who depended chiefly on the relief afforded them from the funds bequeathed by pious persons, and distributed by the monks. They were then reduced to wait for their support from casual charity; this source was soon found to be totally inadequate to their necessities; in the year 1577, the voluntary contributions of the inhabitants of St. Mary's parish amounted to no more than thirty-nine shillings, a sum which could be of little utility in supplying the wants for a whole year, of the aged and infirm poor of an extensive district. To remedy this general evil, an act was passed in the 34th of Queen Elizabeth, for levying a rate on the parishioners, and appointing overseers to divide the produce in administering to the

* "The mayor is coroner for the town by virtue of his office, but appoints a deputy, usually the town clerk, who is confirmed in his office by the king's sign manual."

Coate's History of Reading, p. 46L.

necessities of the poor in each parish; this enactment universally demanded, and popular at that period, is considered the origin of the present poor laws, a system so humane in principle, and so ineffective, in management.

When the rate was first levied the parishes were called upon for what was called week's pay; each parish, according to its extent and means, being obliged to furnish a corresponding number of weeks' pay to be applied to the maintenance of the poor during the current year. St. Mary's parish it is thought contributed, at first, twenty weeks' pay, at twelve shillings per week, which would amount to twelve pounds annually for the use of the poor of that parish; the inhabitants, however, were differently assessed, being divided into four classes, of which, each person in the first class, paid two-pence; in the second, three half-pence; in the third, a penny; and in the fourth, one half-penny. In 1607 the amount of rate, collected in St. Mary's, had increased to £17 12s. 5d, the inhabitants having been called upon to furnish pay for an additional number of weeks; this call continued to increase so rapidly, that in 1674, when the parish was assessed for 100 weeks' pay, the alarmed church-wardens and overseers made an order signifying, that if any person should receive a stranger into his house, and not give security, within forty days, that he should not become chargeable to the parish, such person should have his taxes doubled; and they very properly carried their law into effect, two years afterwards, in the person of a certain Richard Landers, who had foolishly incurred the penalty, and found himself obliged to pay it. The obnoxious rate continued to encrease alarmingly up to the year 1757, when the great number of weeks pay demanded for that year is supposed to have been the reason of the present mode of assessing the inhabitants having been adopted, by a pound rate on lands, houses, and stock in trade, in the proportion of two thirds on houses, and the full amount of the rate on lands. Mr. Man quotes from the parish registers a table of assessments taken every tenth year, showing the, at first, gradual, but, subsequently, rapid en-

crease in the numbers of the original week rate; and the amount levied in the three parishes by the present mode of assessment, in 1812; both of which we sub-join.

Years.	Weeks pay.	Years.	Weeks pay.
1647	24	1707	286
1657	40	1717	338
1667	63	1727	312
1677	156	1737	442
1687	208	1747	364
1697	338	1757	547

Amount Levied in 1812.

	On Houses		On Land		On Stock		Amt. of Rate.		
	s.	d.	s.	d.	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
St. Mary's	7	0	10	6	2	6	3789	11	6
St. Lawrence's	6	0	9	0	3	0	2579	11	4
St. Giles's	4	2	6	3			2616	0	3½

Total of one year. £8985 3 1½

The rates are, at present, highest in the parish of St. Lawrence, where they are seven shillings and ninepence in the pound*. In St. Mary's, they are only four shillings and sixpence on two thirds of the rental, or three shillings in the pound on the rack rents, and they are still lower in the parish of St. Giles. It is hoped when the abbey property and the new road become occupied, and when the measures taken by the overseers to afford employment to the paupers shall have been fairly tried, that the rates will be as low in the parish of St. Lawrence as in either of the other two. These periods, we believe,

* In the year 1798, the rates in this parish, raised for the relief of the poor, were only two shillings in the pound on the value of houses, and three shillings in the pound on land, or stock in trade: the land tax of the same parish for the same year, at four shillings in the pound, amounted to £787 19s. 6d. In St. Giles's parish, during the same period, the poor rates were four shillings in the pound, on land; and two shillings and eight pence in the pound, on houses; two years after the rate on land was increased to seven shillings and sixpence in the pound, and that on houses to five shillings. It will thus appear, that since the earliest of the above periods the rates in the parish of St. Lawrence have increased, while those of St. Giles's parish have diminished.

are not far distant. The site of the abbey is to be converted into a square, and the houses now occupying that site are fast undergoing the work of destruction. Among the relics of the old building thus destroyed are the walls, and the Saxon arches at the end of the refectory, but it is said the latter have been purchased by a gentleman who intends to re-erect them. On taking down a cieling in one of the houses lately occupied, an ancient grained oak roof was discovered; it extended nearly the whole length of the house, is slightly arched, and from its style there is no doubt of its having been removed from the abbey, where it may possibly have formed the roof of the refectory. Two ancient stone fire places have been also brought to light, with a great variety of carved stone mouldings, and other interesting relics of the olden time. The other improvements, by which a considerable reduction in the rates of the parish of St. Lawrence is expected, are proceeding towards completion; the new line of road, indeed, may be said to be finished; and the overseers of the above parish are themselves actively employed in relieving the rate payers by every means in their power; they have procured work for many of the weavers who receive parish relief, and have thereby already paid for the expence of fitting up the looms; and they have distributed among the payers of rate a printed list of payments made to the poor during the space of three months, that the parishioners may have an opportunity of ascertaining whether the persons relieved by them are proper objects for the parish funds. This proceeding was instituted on account of various fictitious tales of distress having been made to the parish authorities by persons earning considerable sums of money, and who have succeeded in defrauding the really necessitous poor, by obtaining money under false pretences from a fund intended solely for the relief of the latter, and which proceeds of their fraud are generally expended in low games of chance, and the *symposia* of the beer shops.

ALMSHOUSES.

For the further relief of the aged and infirm poor, almshouses have been erected at different periods with sums bequeathed by various benevolent individuals, which houses are usually distinguished by the names of their respective founders. The most ancient are those of John Leech (John Alarder, or John of the Larder) which were founded in 1477, and are now situated in St. Mary's Butts. In the year 1450 the abböt and convent of Reading granted to the above person a tenement on Bernard's Hill, in the street called Old-street or Wood-street, at the yearly rent of one shilling. This tenement John of the Larder pulled down, and on its site he erected five almshouses, which number he directed by his will should be increased to eight, and the expence of building be defrayed by certain sums of money due to him at his decease. His executors were also instructed to purchase certain lands and houses for an annual rent-charge, to support the future inmates of the tenements thus erected; and the testator, by a deed dated the 16th of Henry VII. vested the whole of the lands, rents, and tenements so devised in the mayor and corporation, by whom the almshouses for the men were re-built in the year 1775, and those for the women in 1790, which were increased to four, and are at present inhabited by nine poor persons, men and women: three from St. Mary's Parish, three from St. Giles, and three from the parish of St. Lawrence. Each of these persons receive 1s. 8d. a week, or more if the charity will allow of an increase; and once a year the men have each a coat, and the women a gown.

Harrison's alms-houses, situated in Southampton street, in the parish of St. Giles, were erected in accordance with the will of Mr. Bernard Harrison, brewer, dated September 2nd, 1617. This gentleman's legacy consisted of houses, land, and a rent-charge (vested in the corporation, for the benefit of the poor) with the profits arising from which eight houses were erected for the reception of persons of either sex, belonging to the above parish, but

no man was admitted whose wife was under fifty years of age. These houses were rebuilt at the beginning of the present century, and are now wholly appropriated to females, who receive every three months the sum of six shillings and three pence.

In the year 1624 Mr. Griffin Jenkins, hair merchant, of Reading, bequeathed five tenements, situated in Johnson's Yard in Minster-street, in trust to the corporation and churchwardens of St. Lawrence and St. Mary, to place in them five poor aged men, belonging to those parishes, to reside therein rent free.

Mr. William Kendrick, clothier, of this town, by will dated August 30, 1634, gave five tenements on the west side of Sievier's-street for alms-houses, for two men of St. Laurence's parish, two of St. Giles's, and one woman of St. Mary's, to be elected by the corporation. His foundation was endowed with a rent-charge of twenty pounds a year on lands at Hartley, fifty pounds to purchase land, to keep the alms-houses in repair, and the rent of a house and barn adjoining the latter. The men were to be allowed each one shilling and sixpence weekly, and a coat once in three years; and the women one shilling weekly, with four shillings per quarter in addition, for washing the men's linen, and a gown every third year. With the remainder of the money the corporation were to pay forty shillings annually to the church wardens of St. Mary's, for the lights used at morning prayers (which early prayers have been long disused, but we have not heard how the sum bequeathed for the lights has been since employed); ten shillings to the vicar for his vault in the chancel, and the same sum for the use of the corporation, to be spent when they met to settle the accounts of the charity. If any surplus remained after this, it was to be distributed generally among the poor of the place.

Sir Thomas Vachell, by a deed of gift dated January the 6th, 1634, gave in trust to the corporation a tenement situated on the south side of Castle-street, near Pinkney-lane, and endowed it with forty pounds per annum, on lands in the parish of Shinfield, for

the habitation of six aged, infirm, and unmarried men, four of whom were to be chosen out of St. Mary's parish, one from St. Lawrence's, and one from that of St. Giles; each inmate to have two shillings per week paid them every Saturday, and if the funds of the charity will admit of it, a gown each, and two loads of wood annually. The founder directed that after his decease the six alms-men should be placed and displaced by the mayor and bugesses for the time being, and by any "person or persons of the name, blood, and kindred of the said Sir Thomas Vachell, who for the time being shall be owner or owners of the manor or farm of Coley; or in default thereof, such other person or persons who, for the time being, shall be owner or owners of the manor or farm of Coley."

The next foundation of alms-houses occurred in 1647, when Mr. Richard Jayes bequeathed four houses in Hosier's-lane, for four poor widows, not under fifty years of age, who were to be elected by the churchwardens and overseers of St. Mary's parish, and allowed one shilling and three pence each per week. This foundation was endowed with the rent of two meadows at Sulhamstead, part of one of which was cut off when the canal between Reading and Newbury was made. This measure caused an interruption in the receipt of the rent, as the churchwardens of Woolhampton, who were appointed joint trustees with those of Reading, refused to agree with the terms proposed by the commissioners, and we are not acquainted in what way the dispute terminated.

In 1696, Mr. John Hall, apothecary, left a rent charge on an estate at Caversham, of five shillings per week, for five poor people, who were to receive in addition ten shillings per week for fuel, during the life time of the testator's wife, after whose decease an increased rent charge was to fall in trust to the corporation, with five tenements in Chain Lane, for the benefit of five necessitous and unmarried people: one from the parish of St. Lawrence, and two each from the parishes of St. Mary and St.

Giles. The inmates to be allowed one shilling and sixpence per week each, twelve shilling per annum for fuel, and ten more for clothing. These alms-houses are situated in Chain Lane, and have on them the following inscription :—

Ex dono Johannis Hall Pharmacopei.

It will appear from the above that there are forty-one natives of Reading who are enjoying the benevolence, not only of the founders of the alms-houses which they inhabit, but also of other charitable individuals who have endowed these houses with additional sums of money in order to promote the comfort of their aged and infirm inmates, and which sums will be found in the list of charitable donations. We have already said that the alms-houses of John a Larder are the most ancient foundation of that kind, now existing in the town, but the return of colleges and chauntries made in the 31st year of Henry VIII., mentions a hospital or alms-house, founded by William Barnes, which was probably ancient at that period, and its foundation, in consequence, of an earlier date, then that of the houses erected by John Leach; it is thus noticed in the certificate, or return, we have alluded to: “a hospital, or alms-house, founded by William Barnes, to the intent to have certain poor people there lodged; and for that purpose he did endow the same house with certain lands and rents as followeth, howbeit they have not shewed any foundation or grant. The said hospital is situate within the parish of St. Mary’s, in Reading.

“The value of the said hospital, by year, £7 6s 4d. whereof for rents resolute 20s; and so remaineth £6 6s. 4d., which is yearly expended for the maintenance of the lodgings reserved and kept for the poor people, and for repairing of the said house there, ornaments, &c., none; only the beds whereon the poor people be lodged, not worth the making of an inventory.”*

* In the return of the Commissioners of Edward VI., this charitable foundation is not noticed; and no account of it is now to be found.

MILITARY AND POLICE.

The only local force in Reading, besides the usual constabulary body, is the staff of the county militia; before the establishment of a standing army, the town was defended by trained bands, who were summoned to action by the magistrates, on any appearance of riot. Once a year they attended the court-leet, a fine being levied on those who absented themselves from muster without a written exemption, for which a small sum was demanded; their weapon was the long-bow, to which they were regularly trained, when muster was over. The custom of paying for exemptions is still kept up by the constables, who summon the junior inhabitants of the town to the court-leet, and release them from personal attendance on paying a penny; this fee is claimed by the recorder, but Mr. Man says the constables generally expend it in a supper.

In time of war, if men were required for foreign service, each district sent a number of efficient trained archers according to its population. In the French war, under Edward 3rd, Reading sent twenty men to increase that monarch's force; in the same war, London supplied one thousand men, a greater number than any other city or town supplied, and Rochester and Maidstone ten each, which is the lowest number in the list of assessed towns, quoted from Montifiori's Commercial Dictionary, as furnishing armed men at the above period. In the reign of Henry VI., the borough was assessed at thirty men, whom the inhabitants were summoned to provide at their own expence; to raise this force, ninety of the principal residents were divided into classes, each of which agreed to provide a man and equip him at the common expence of the class to which he belonged; it is thought that the small number among whom the expence of raising the required body of men was divided, is a proof of the smallness of the population at that period, when compared with its present state. The town was again summoned, and more than once, during the reign of Henry VIII., when the inhabitants provided, by the same method we have just described, twenty-four horse soldiers destined for Scotland.

The expence, on this occasion, was divided among an hundred and fifty-two persons; ninety-two of them contributing for the harness, and sixty of a higher class of householders furnishing the men and horses; among these, the mayor paid for "half a horse and his apparel," and the three vicars raising a horse and a half between them. In the same reign, when the king was going with an army into France, twenty foot soldiers, and twelve mounted men were sent by this town, according to order, to join his majesty's other forces; in obedience to another order from the government, some time after the above, "ten soldiers well garnished and weaponed," were dispatched from here to the assistance of the Princess Mary, who was then asserting her claim to the crown; and three years after her establishment on the throne, the town sent forty well appointed men to attend her sacred and amiable person; the only thing remarkable in this levy is, that it was the first instance of the military of the town being clothed in an uniform, and the last of a levy at all under the old system, which was superseded by the introduction of standing armies supplied with men, either by enlistment or the ballot. During the French revolution this borough raised two volunteer companies, and when the country was, at a subsequent period, threatened with invasion from France, the inhabitants to the number of two hundred, formed a volunteer force, which was divided into three companies, of grenadiers, centre, and light-infantry; these corps, with all the similar corps of the county, were reviewed by George III., on Bulmarsh Heath, the 26th of July 1799; and being dissolved, after the peace of Amiens, in 1801, the regimental colours were suspended in St. Lawrence's church, as a memorial of the loyalty and patriotism of those inhabitants who had been enrolled under them. On the renewed threat of invasion, recourse was again had to the volunteer system, and the Reading corps were revived and increased; those receiving pay were divided into four companies, amounting together to nearly two hundred; and the other body, called the Loyal Reading Volunteers, into

eight companies, consisting in the whole of nearly five hundred men.* This force, in connexion with the general county one, which also had the honour of being reviewed, and of hearing its military perfection complimented by the king, was dissolved as soon as the danger of the threatened invasion was removed, when most of the men and many of the officers were embodied in the regiment of local militia about to be raised in 1808.

It would appear from an earlier passage in Mr. Man's history, whose authority we have followed above, that the dissolution of the volunteer force was attended with some circumstances of disgrace, which however should attach to another party than the gallant *body* in question. We subjoin it in the writer's own words: "On the 25th of June this year (1809) a mutiny took place among the local militia, while exercising in the Forbury, on being refused their marching guinea, previous to their dismissal on the next day, on which occasion several companies laid down their arms; to which conduct, as it was afterwards asserted, they had been incited by some of the volunteers urging them on, and promising to stand by them. How far this assertion is founded in fact we know not, but certain it is the officers of the volunteers were by no means implicated in the charge; neither could it be expected that they should be answerable for the conduct of their men, while off from duty. Notwithstanding this however on complaint being made at the war-office, by the commander of the local militia, on the supposed misconduct of the Reading Volunteers, they were in the July following dismissed from his Majesty's service without the smallest remuneration, and without even a compliment being paid them for their meritorious conduct in coming forward at the hour of danger to serve their country, almost wholly at their own expence."

* Their uniforms were blue, with scarlet facings and regulation caps; and the pay two shillings a week. The regiment had also an excellent band, of music, and a pair of elegant colours: one the Union flag, and the other the town arms, encircled by a wreath of laurels, and bearing the motto GOD SAVE THE KING.

PHILOSOPHICAL INSTITUTION.

Among the useful additions to the other advantages possessed by the town, may be reckoned the establishment here in the year 1831 of a Philosophical Institution for the purpose of promoting the cause of science. The members consist of shareholders, and subscribers, and we are happy to add that considering the recent formation of the society, it is enjoying a degree of prosperity that confers a high credit on those lovers of scientific pursuits to whose hands the management of the Institution is entrusted. The number of shareholders at present is about sixty, and of subscribers nearly the same. The price of a share amounts to five pounds; and an additional annual subscription of half-a-guinea entitles the proprietor of a share to the enjoyment of all the privileges of the Institution. Subscribers of one guinea a year who are not shareholders are entitled to nearly equal privileges with the latter, with some slight exceptions; and for the convenience of sojourners in the town, or persons residing in its vicinity, the treasurer is empowered to receive subscriptions for half a year at twelve shillings and sixpence; for a quarter, seven shillings and sixpence; and even for a month, at the low charge of three shillings and sixpence. Nine gentlemen form the committee, in addition to whom there is a president, two vice-presidents, three trustees, a treasurer, an honorary secretary, and a curator, who have together published sixty-eight rules for the management of the society and its affairs, the duties of its officers, the convening of General Meetings, and the regulations of the Museum, the apparatus, and the lectures. The Museum will be found well worthy of inspection, the contributions to it have been already numerous, and most of the specimens are singular and interesting: gay productions from Otaheite, and mummy cloths from Thebes, India mocassins, and North American snow shoes, the wide-flying Assagai from Caffraria, and poisoned arrows from other regions of Southern Africa, anklets that have graced the heels of Tambookie girls, swords that have been wielded among

the wild tribes of Central Asia, and the deadly, flame shaped Creese from sunny Malaga. The museum also possesses part of the India rubber-like skin of a rhinoceros, and near to it a portion of what Tacitus would call the

Hærens corpori tegmen

of that "greatest happiness" philosopher, Jeremy Bentham. This remnant of the humanity of the would-be (and with the greatest sincerity we add well meaning) legislator, bears a close resemblance to a yellow and shrivelled piece of parchment, it is however not undeserving of attention. Among the remaining specimens will be found a seal used by the ancient Egyptians for stamping the bricks made at Thebes; a small idol said to be worshipped by the Hindoos in the neighbourhood of Madras; varieties of marble from the Forum Pompeii, a tomb at Mycenæ, and from a burying place and temple of Serapis, in and adjacent to Puzznoli. There are also some fine specimens of calcedony in different states; crystal from the Diamond Valley of Arabia Petrea; a sandy deposit from the region of Mount Sinai; agate and corals from Egypt; and plaister from Sallust's house at Pompeii. Among the volcanic specimens, there is a very remarkable one from St Helena; and a box made of the various kinds of lava from Vesuvius. Caversham has contributed some chalk formations; and fossil remains, bearing impressions of different ferns, have been brought from the coal fields of Somerset and Stafford Shires. The ravages of the *Teredo Navalis*, or ship worm, may be seen in a piece of the ship, Lord Melville, taken from her eighteen months after she was off the stocks; and among the birds will be found the lovely Thibet Reeve, some beautiful bitterns, crested cranes, and macaws; and a fine Gossanda, shot within a few miles of the town. One of the most interesting specimens in the whole collection is an embalmed hand, supposed to be that of Queen Adeliza, wife of Henry I.: the following account, written by Dr. Baily, is attached to it: "An embalmed hand, found

about fifty years ago in the ruins of the Reading Abbey church, at its eastern extremity, and holding a slender rod, surmounted probably with a crucifix, or other emblematical device. The occasion that gave rise to this discovery was the digging for a foundation for the present gaol, part of which now stands on the site of the said Abbey church. This relic which still retains the fragrance of the embalming gum first came into the possession of Dr. Blenkinsop of Reading, who handed it over to Dr. Hooper, and by Dr. H. it was presented to the Museum. That this was the hand of some royal personage may be fairly inferred from the situation in which it was found, and the circumstance of its being embalmed. That it is the hand of a female is most evident. The only authentic records we have of the interment of any English queen in the Reading Abbey Church is that relating to Adeliza, second queen of Henry I; upon these grounds it is called "Queen Adeliza's Hand." The society have lately received a very valuable present intended for their Museum from Lady Sidmouth, consisting of an Egyptian idol and two Etruscan vases, the age of which is estimated at not less than two thousand years.

At the period of the appearance of cholera in this country, a Board of Health was established in Reading, in order to provide every available means to avert the threatened danger. The Board consisted of the magistrates, the clergy, the dissenting ministers, the medical practitioners, and some of the most influential gentlemen of the three parishes, who were employed during the winter of 1832-3 in attending to the domestic comforts of the poor, and distributing among the most necessitous, flannel, blankets, food, and coals. The original Board however finding their powers insufficient to reach many evils, the existence of which among the poorer classes tended to generate and encourage the worst symptoms of the malady, dissolved themselves, and were re-appointed by the Privy Council, who conferred on them ample powers, authorized by the legislature for the prevention of the disease. Happily they were not called upon to fulfil any of the perilous duties to which they would

have been summoned if the fatal epidemic had attacked the town with any degree of virulence; but that the exertions they *did* make were not unattended by corresponding success, is proved from the fact that the cholera did not spread here, and that there were fewer attacks during the time the Board was in existence, from those other diseases which are mostly prevented by the means recommended and promoted by the members, for the cleanness and free ventilation of the more confined parts of the town. The precautionary measures which were adopted necessarily entailed some expence, and the Reading Board made a claim, under the provisions of the general order from the council, for two hundred and forty pounds, stating at the same time that this sum was only to form a fund to which recourse might be had in case of necessity, and which was to be appropriated under the sanction of magisterial authority. The claim however was resisted—a proceeding which might have proved of serious injury to the town and neighbourhood, had it pleased God to have visited them with the infliction less lightly; but which proved of little importance, from the comparatively limited degree in which the services of the Board were required, beyond that of increasing the expences of the latter by nearly a quarter of the whole sum employed, and which amounted to forty-four pounds, eleven shillings: of this, the charge of nine pounds, sixteen shillings, was incurred for printing, stationery, and advertising; twenty-one pounds were awarded for the services of the secretary; three guineas for the expenses of the town clerk's journey to attend the Privy Council; and the remainder was expended in rent, fuel, drugs, &c. The smallness of the total fully bears out the assertion of the members themselves, that they were duly mindful of the economy which was enjoined them as much by their duty as by their interests.

The sources of public amusement in Reading are confined to occasional concerts, the county balls, and theatre. An amateur musical society was established for some time, and during its continuance the concerts

given by the members were praised in high terms by the inhabitants of the town and neighbourhood who resorted to them; but the efforts of the society were altogether so little appreciated, that it was only with the strictest attention to economy they were relieved from the pressure of a considerable debt. It is somewhat singular that a society of this nature should have failed here at a moment when almost every considerable town in England possesses one resembling it, all vying with each other in generous emulation to obtain an exalted reputation in the musical world. Competent judges had awarded a very high standing to the amateur meeting at Reading, and it was a meed well merited by the united ability of the members, and the acknowledged talent of their leader, Mr. Venua of Twyford. On the dissolution of their society in 1833, a dissolution regretted by so many who might more zealously have supported the institution when it was in existence, the members presented their esteemed director with a small testimonial of the sense they entertained of his services in behalf of the society, and which had been rendered gratuitously through pure love of the tuneful art. This acknowledgment was presented to Mr. Venua at a full meeting by the mayor; it consists of a splendid coffee pot and stand of beautiful design, bearing the following inscription:

“Presented to F. M. A. Venua, esq. by the members and friends of the Reading Amateur Musical Society, as a token of their high regard for his musical talent, and their gratitude for his gratuitous and valuable services to the society.”

This was their last public meeting, and however desirable, there are little hopes of the old and pleasant winter concerts being again renewed. The above meeting was nevertheless attended with as much good feeling and harmony as if the members composing it were likely to come together often. The style in which some of the pieces were executed only caused a deeper regret of the little chance that existed of the same performances being heard again; and these sons of song may have some consolation in remembering that though their efforts to

lead an additional interesting feature to the town failed for want of patronage, they at least remained consistent to the last, and died, like the swan, singing.

The theatre, situated in Friar street, is small, but is as neatly fitted up as most provincial theatres. It is generally supplied for about six weeks in summer or autumn, with a company from Oxford.

GEOLOGY.

The greatest natural curiosity in the neighbourhood of Reading is the stratum of sea sand in Kate's Grove lane,* about twenty yards below the level of Bob's Mount. This stratum of sand contains a great number of oyster shells and fishes' teeth, the latter being very small and sharply pointed. The shells when taken out of the ground are perfect in appearance, but if collected for preservation, they should be carefully exposed for some time to the heat of a slow fire, without which precaution they are liable to crumble to pieces, but by following it they may be preserved for many years. These celebrated fossil oysters are found with both their valves or shells connected, as though they had never been opened, but they are so brittle that the least violence will separate them. Many however are found quite entire, and some double oysters have been dug out with all their valves united. They lie through a circumference of five or six acres of ground, in beds of green sand, upon a foundation of hard rocky chalk. The stratum of sand and shells is about two feet deep, immediately above which is a bed of blueish clay, hard, brittle, rugged, and of no utility; and about a yard in depth a stratum of fuller's earth, nearly two feet and a half deep, lies upon the layer of clay, and above the former there is about seven feet of fine white sand, without any mixture of earth or clay; a stiff red clay, used for the manufacture of tiles, forms the uppermost stratum, which is covered by a little common earth, about two feet deep. A few egg fish have been dug out of the hill, but none lately; and it is said a spider

* Kate's Grove or Cat's Grove, is in the parish of St. Giles, and was usually called Cadeles Grove and Cattle Grove.

was once found alive here, embedded in the heart of a solid flint. The appearance of fossil remains is not entirely confined to this spot, though they are found there in greater abundance than any where else in the neighbourhood. The same appearances are discovered on digging wells in a north-west direction from Kate's Grove Lane, as far as the parish of Tilehurst. At Prospect Hill, in the latter parish, some workmen found, at a very great depth from the surface of the hill, a large block of stone, on removing which they discovered a vast quantity of cockle shells, on a layer of sea sand. Various conjectures have been made to account for the origin of this continued stratum, but none determine with any degree of satisfaction or probability whether it is the ruins of another world, or the decomposition of this. We subjoin one of the theories on the subject, quoted from Plot's *Natural History of Oxfordshire*, printed in 1617, which we leave to the judgment of our readers. The author of it appears to have possessed a very enviable facility for smoothing difficulties.

“Reading having been a town of very great action during the invasion of the Danes, who cutting a deep trench across, between the Kennet and Thames, and enclosing themselves, as it were, in an island, held it against King Ethelred and Alfred, his brother, a considerable time, from whence, in all probability, the Saxons having removed their cattle, it is likely that they might be supplied by their navy with oysters, which during the time of the abode of their army on land might be very suitable employment for it. Which conjecture if allowed, there is nothing more required to make out the possibility of the bed of oysters coming thither, without a deluge, but that Cat's Grove was the place appointed for the army's repast.”

BOTANY.

Mr. Man mentions a curious plant called the man orchis, having been found in the meadows near Reading, it is, however, extremely rare. The meadows on the south-west of the town abound generally with peat. The river Kennet takes its course

through a line of peat bed which extends from Reading to Hungerford. All the meadows between those places and contiguous to the above river are beautifully watered and produce a large quantity of hay, independently of the early feed got from them. Part of the surface of this tract of meadows is of a gravelly soil, which is best adapted for water meadows; the other part of the tract consists of peat of a peculiar and excellent quality, extending from one quarter to three quarters of a mile in breadth, and sixteen miles in length. The great value of peat arises from the great demand for it as a fuel, and for its ashes as a manure. Grass lands, particularly clover, leys, and sainfoin, are supposed to derive great benefit from peat ashes being laid upon them. The quantity necessary to dress an acre varies according to the condition of the land, but it is reckoned at from fifteen to twenty-five bushels. The peat found in the meadows near the town is very little used, from its supposed inferiority in quality to that found in the neighbourhood of Woolhampton. Mr. John Stevens of Reading once opened a pit in one of his grounds for the purpose of procuring peat ashes, but the attempt proved unsuccessful, from the prejudices entertained by the usual purchasers of that production, in favour of the ashes procured at Woolhampton. Urns and other remains have been discovered within the peat, and numbers of various kinds of trees, irregularly disposed on each other; hazel nuts and the cones of the fir-tree are frequently met with in the peat bed just noticed, but we believe that no acorns have ever been found in it.

POPULATION.

An account of the number of inhabitants in Reading was taken in 1556, by order of Cardinal Pole, at which time the census amounted to 2,500; but the real number is said to have been considerably greater, and to have amounted to nearly 4000, as in less than fifty years subsequent to the period above mentioned, the population amounted to about 4,700. It is ascertained that during the next one hundred years the total number of the inhabitants had increased by near

300. In the year 1700 the amount was 7,690; in 1790 the population had arisen to 10,789 individuals, but in ten years it decreased to 9,742; it again increased in the following ten years, and reached 1193 in 1810, and fell off once more in 1811, when the amount of population just equalled what it had been in 1790. In 1821 there were 2,585 houses, and 12,867 inhabitants. The following is the amount returned on the 30th of May, 1831:

St. Lawrence	-	-	-	4,046
St. Mary	-	-	-	6,797
St. Giles	-	-	-	5,107
				<hr/>
				15,950
				<hr/>

In the year 1731 the population was only 8000, and we find by the above total that in the course of one century the number of inhabitants was very nearly doubled; indeed it is not improbable that the amount may have been more than doubled, as the Berkshire Staff and Military in the town were not included in the return made in 1831.

Baptisms, Marriages, and Burials during the year 1831:

	Mar.	Bap.	Bur.
St. Lawrence	42	123	97
St. Mary	53	198	111
St. Giles	44	142	110
<hr/>			
Total	139	463	318
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LOCAL COINAGE.

Tokens have been coined at various times in Reading for the relief of the trading community, when a circulating medium was wanted. Coates says that no town piece is known, and that the tradesmen's tokens are not very numerous. He notices a heart-shaped token of Hugh Cameron as being rare and curious, and adds the following list of others frequently to be met with:*

* From the accession of Elizabeth to the reign of Charles II, permission to coin small money, or tokens was given to all tradesmen who chose to do so. The materials were generally

- 1 Mary Blower. A coat of arms. Of Reading, 1652, M.B.
- 2 Francis Tassel. The head of Charles II. crowned. In Reading, 1665, F.T.E.
- 3 Daniel Martin, D.M.E. In Reading, Gardner, 1653.
- 4 John Wilder, the elder, in Reading, I.W.A. A pelican feeding her young in the nest.
- 5 John Hawie. A pair of shears. In Reading, I.H.M.
- 6 Thomas Phipps. A man dipping candles. Of Redding, 1652, T.P.E.
- 7 Henry Whittell. A woman churning. In Reading, H.W.I.
- 8 Thomas Underwood. A pair of shears. In Reading, 1666, T.U.M.
- 9 Nicholas Edwards. A coat of arms. In Reading, 1667, N.E.E.
- 10 Clement Barlow, at the Bell in Reading, C.M.G. A bell.
- 11 John Harrison, living in Reading, I.H.M. A candle in a candlestick.
- 12 Martha Knight, 1559, in Reading, Lin. Drap.
- 13 Moses Lamb. A pair of shears. In Redden, 1658, M.L.R.
- 14 Thomas Winckells. Three stars. In Reading, baker, T.W.A.
- 15 Thomas Bye, of Reading, mealman, T.B.L. The iron cramp of a mill, and a sack of flour.
- 16 Frances Brown. The baker's arms. In Redin, baker, F.B.K.
- 17 John Paise at the Angel. In Redding, 1666, I.P.E.
- 18 William Burly. A hand and glove. In Reading, 1655, W.B.E.
- 19 William Champe, 1658. In Reading, W. C. T.
- 20 Richard Hallows. Crossed stockings. In Reading, 1656, R.H.M.
- 21 Humphrey Mills. The drapers' arms. Draper in Reading, H.M.
- 22 Solomon Barnard. A rabbit. Reading, 1653, S.B.E.

We may mention in addition to these that I. B. Monck, esq. of Coley House issued in 1812 three

of lead, tin, copper, or brass; and communities or individuals who issued this useful kind of specie were obliged to take it again, when brought to them. In large towns where tokens of various sorts were in circulation, it was usual for a tradesman to keep a sorting box, into the partitions of which he put the several pieces of the respective persons who issued them, and when he had accumulated a certain quantity of one individual's money, he sent it to him, and received silver in exchange. This custom was continued till the year 1672, when Charles II. struck a sufficient quantity of halfpence and farthings for the exigencies of trade, and stopped the further circulation of private tokens.

sorts of tokens in gold and silver to a large amount; a step which was of great benefit to the inhabitants, who were at that time much distressed by the want of a circulating medium, owing to the war on the continent, and the constant drain of the specie for the payment of our forces in Spain. Of these tokens one was a gold piece valued at forty shillings, and the other two silver, valued respectively at half-a-crown and one shilling and sixpence. Their impressions were as follows:

- 1 The head of King Alfred with crown and sceptre, the monarch's name and date (1812) beneath; the whole encircled with this legend: "Pignora Certa Petis, Dd Pignora certa;" on the reverse, 40 Shillings, Berks. Token, Standd. Gold, 6 Dwts. 18 Gr. Reading; around which, Payable in Bank Notes, at 6s. the dwt. by I. B. Monck, esq.
- 2 The motto, "Labimur In Pejus, Donec Meliora Revertant, 1811," encircling the corporation arms; on the other side, Half-Crown Token, Spau. Doll. Silver, 6 Dwts. Payable in Bank Notes by I. B. Monck, esq.
- 3 The corporation arms within the legend, "Labimur, &c." and the impression on the reverse the same as on that of the half-crown token, except in naming the difference of weight and value: the value of this token being, 18 Pence, and the weight, 4 Dwts.

NEWSPAPERS.

There are two newspapers published weekly in Reading, "The Reading Mercury" and "The Berkshire Chronicle;" the former was established by Mr. John Watts, a member of the corporation, and the first number appeared on Monday, July 8, 1723. The Mercury advocates the liberal side of politics, while the principles of the Chronicle are strictly Conservative; and they are both ably conducted journals.

In conclusion of our general view of the town, we may remark, as the last of the miscellaneous notices of which it is comprised, that Reading has had the honour of giving its name to a title of a barony. Sir Jacob Astley of Melton, Constable, in Norfolk, was, in return for his services to Charles I., created Lord Astley of Reading, in the year 1645; but the dignity became some time afterwards extinct at the decease of his grandson Jacob.

The title was however renewed, and conferred in 1716 on General William Cadogan, who was created Lord Cadogan, Baron of Reading, for having signalized himself under the Duke of Marlborough, and during the rebellion of 1715. He was afterwards successively created Baron Oakley, Viscount Caversham, and Earl Cadogan; all which titles became extinct at his death, except that of Baron Oakley; which devolved on his brother Charles, from whom the present Lord Cadogan is descended.

PERSONS OF NOTE, NATIVES OF READING.

ROBERT MASON

was a student at Oxford, where he took the degree of Doctor in Civil Law. He was afterwards arch-deacon of Northumberland, and was collated to the precentorship of Lincoln in 1481; he exchanged the prebend of Kilsley in Northamptonshire, annexed to that precentorship, for the prebend of Farrendon. He died in 1493, and was buried in the cathedral of Lincoln.

SIR THOMAS WHITE,

"born at Rixmansworth (in Hertfordshire), was merchant taylor in London, where he was lord-mayor, anno 1553. He built Gloucester Hall, and endowed St. John's College in Oxford. He bestowed great sums of money on several corporations for poor freemen." The above extract from Fuller's *Worthies* has at various times been proved to be incorrect, as far as it relates to the birthplace of Sir Thomas White. That benevolent gentleman was the son of a native of Rickmansworth, engaged in the clothing business in Reading, and is supposed to have been born in a house, not now standing, in the Butter Market. Sir Thomas served his apprenticeship in London, and became by his industry and economy one of the wealthiest merchants in the city. He served the office of sheriff under Edward VI., and arose to the dignity of lord mayor in the first year of Queen Mary, by whom he was knighted for his efficient services during the rebellion of Sir Thomas Wyatt. He was twice married, and died on the 11th of February, 1566, in the 72nd year of his age. His burial, which took place at St. John's College, was, according to the directions expressed in his will, conducted in a private manner; and the munificent bequests that he made, many of which remain to this day, the memorials of his extensive liberality, prove the improbability of a report, at one time circulated, that towards the close of his life he fell into extreme poverty.

ARCHBISHOP LAUD.

William Laud was born in Broad-street, Reading, October the 7th, 1573. His father was a native of Wokingham, and carried on the trade of a clothier in this town, of which his

mother was a native. He received his education at the free school here, and in July, 1589, was admitted of St. John's College in Oxford. During his residence there, he successively attained all the honours which the university could confer; but he incurred the displeasure of the vice-chancellor, Dr. Abbot, by defending the perpetual visibility of the Church of Rome, as a part of the church of Christ, till the Reformation; enraged the Puritans by maintaining the necessity of baptism and episcopal government; and gave great offence to the Calvinists by attacking their doctrines, and preaching in favour of the Arminians. The greatest error however committed by him while in the university, and one which he bitterly repented all the remainder of his life, was his performing the ceremony of marriage between the Earl of Devonshire (to whom he was chaplain) and Penelope, the wife of Lord Rich, from whom she was living in a state of separation. He obtained the vicarage of Stanford in Northamptonshire in 1607, and the advowson of North Kilworth in Leicestershire the following year. In September, 1609, he preached his first sermon before King James, and in the month of May following was presented to Cuckstone in Kent, which he soon afterwards exchanged for Norton. In the course of a few years he was chosen president of St. John's, appointed chaplain to the king, received the prebendary of Bugden, was promoted to the deanery of Gloucester, and inducted into the rectory of Ibstock in Leicestershire. In 1620 he succeeded to a prebend of Westminster, was shortly after appointed bishop of St. David's, and received from the king the rectory of Creeke in Northamptonshire. In 1622 the conference of Laud and Fisher the Jesuit was held before the Marquis of Buckingham and his mother, that they might determine which church they would follow, they being at the time wavering professors of Protestantism. On Candlemas day, 1625, he officiated at the coronation of Charles I., and was subsequently accused of having altered the coronation oath at that ceremony, and adding the words, "saving the king's prerogative royal," to that part where the king swears "to maintain the laws." In 1626 he was translated to Bath and Wells, appointed dean of the chapel royal, and during the next four years was made a privy counsellor, Bishop of London, and Chancellor of the University of Oxford. The severe (and often just) prosecutions which he carried on in the star-chamber and high commission courts against libellous preachers and writers, excited the ill-will and jealousy of his enemies; and the resolution which he formed, while in Scotland with Charles, of introducing the episcopal rule of government into the church of that part of the kingdom, was the first step towards the violent deaths both of himself and his sovereign.

He was translated to the see of Canterbury in August, 1633, and twice during the same month received the offer of a cardinal's hat, which he declined both times with the same

answer, "that somewhat dwelt within him which would not suffer *that*, till Rome were other than it is." His principal acts after his advancement to the archbishopric, all of which were brought as accusations against him at the period of his trial, were:—an injunction that no clergyman should be ordained without a title; an order for the removal of the communion table to the east side of the church; his *supposed* revisal of the declaration concerning lawful sports on Sundays, and the order for the prosecution of all clergymen who refused to read the declaration in their churches; his settlement of the revenues of the London clergy; and his obtaining for those of Ireland a grant of all impropriations then remaining in the crown. While archbishop he was appointed one of the committee of trade and revenue, and a commissioner of the treasury and exchequer. In 1637 the canons which he had compiled for the Scottish liturgy were brought into use, and occasioned most violent tumults at Edinburgh, with great abuse of the archbishop, whose unpopularity was much increased by the prosecution of Prynne, Bastwick, and Burton, and of Bishop Williams and Osbaldeston, the master of Westminster school. Equally offensive to the public was the reduction of master printers, the order that no book should be printed without a permission from Laud, or other church dignitaries, and his letter to the clergy, exhorting them to contribute largely towards raising an army against the Scots. When the new parliament of 1640 was dissolved, the convocation remained sitting, and Laud was accused of being the author of the canons made by the latter assembly. A committee was appointed by the Commons in December 4, of the above year, to prepare a charge against him for the same, and other matters; and in a fortnight afterwards he was formally accused of high treason, and committed into custody until the articles of impeachment were fully prepared. His trial did not come on till March, 12, 1643; he was in the mean time suspended from his office and benefice, and he appears to have suffered a most unjust and rigorous treatment during the term of his captivity. The trial lasted above twenty days, and ended, after some opposition from the Lords, in his being condemned to suffer death by hanging; but on the archbishop petitioning not to be condemned to so ignominious an end, the Commons consented that he should undergo the penalty of being beheaded.* His behaviour on the

* After he had been heard by his counsel, "Sergeant Wilde, on behalf of the Commons, repeated that though it was not alleged that any one of his crimes amounted to a treason or felony, yet all his misdemeanours put together did, by way of accumulation, make many grand treasons. To which the archbishop's advocate replied, "I crave your mercy good Mr. Sergeant, I never understood before this time that two hundred couple of black rabbits would make a black horse."

Southey's Book of the Church, vol. 2, p. 435.

scaffold was remarkable for its dignity, at once heroic and humble. He received the fatal stroke on January 3, 1645, and was buried in the church of All-Hallows, Barking; but the body was removed to St. John's College in 1663, where it was placed in a vault near the altar.

Fuller says that he was "one of low stature but high parts; piercing eyes, cheerful countenance, wherein gravity and pleasantness were well compounded, admirable in his naturals, unblamable in his morals, being very strict in his conversation. Impartial posterity will allow his name to be reposed among the heroes of England, seeing such as behold his expence on St. Paul's as but a cypher, will assign his other benefactions a very valuable signification." The archbishop's benefactions were indeed valuable; and Reading, the town of his birth, has just cause to acknowledge with pride and gratitude the liberality which it has experienced from the hands of the victim of the sanguinary brawlers of "down with Baal's altars." His legacies will be found in the list of Charitable Donations.

NATHANIEL CANON

was a commoner of St. Mary's Hall in 1597. He took one degree in arts, and entering into holy orders, became minister of Wokingham, and afterwards vicar of Hurley, which dignity he enjoyed 46 years. He died in 1664.

THOMAS TURNER,

born in St. Giles's parish, was chaplain to Archbishop Laud, and chaplain in ordinary to Charles I., to whom he constantly adhered in all his sufferings. He was obliged to fly for his life, after being robbed of his effects, and sequestered of his church of St. Olave in Southwark by the usurping government; but the miseries he endured during the period of the commonwealth were in some measure compensated for, by his restoration to his preferments in the church by Charles II. He died in 1672, and was buried in Canterbury Cathedral.

JOHN BLAGRAVE,

The year of his birth is not known, but it is certain that he studied at the free school, and he is said by Wood to have been admitted at St. John's, Oxford. He however took no degree at the university, but after a short residence, returned to Reading to pursue his mathematical studies. He published several works upon various branches of the arts and sciences, and dying at Southcot in 1611, was buried in St. Lawrence's church, near the remains of his mother. He made several bequests to the town, which will be found among the Charitable Donations. One of them is the sum of £10., to be thus disposed of: "Twenty nobles of the £10. to some one poor maiden servant, that hath served, dwelled, and continued in any one service, in any of the three parishes of Reading, in good name and fame, the full term of five years at the least, for her help and performance in marriage. And the better to avoid partiality in the

choice of the said maid, he directs that there shall be yearly, every good Fryday, three such maidens in election, to cast, try, and carry it by lot whose the fortune shall be. The three to be taken out of each parish one; but every fifth year one to be chosen from Southcot." The remainder of the sum is directed to be divided among various parties named in the will. Similar legacies have been left in imitation of this charity, and one of Laud's, but do not extend to those who have received the benefits of Blaggrave's and the archbishop's charities; and in 1786 Aubry Flory, esq. settled five guineas; three to the second highest number thrown by the candidates, and two guineas to the last number of the three.

DANIEL BLAGRAVE,

nephew to the above, was bred to the bar, represented this borough in parliament in 1640, and appointed recorder of it in 1645. He attended the High Court of Justice during the trial of Charles I., and signed the warrant for putting that king to death. He was afterwards Exigenter in the Common Pleas, a Master in Chancery, Treasurer of Berks., and one of the County Commissioners, authorized to remove all insufficient ministers, in which office he was distinguished by his vexatious persecutions of the clergy. He was also a member of the Convention Parliament in 1658, is supposed to have purchased various estates by the emoluments of his office in the Common Pleas; and at the Restoration fled to Achen* in Germany, where he died in an obscure condition in 1668. 7

JOSEPH BLAGRAVE

was born in the parish of St. Giles in 1610, and was a great enthusiast in the study of Astrology; on which science, and its application to other branches of knowledge he published various works. He died in 1679.

WILLIAM CREED

was born in the parish of St. Lawrence, and studied at Oxford, where he rose to be bachelor of divinity, and proctor of the university. During his life time he became rector of East Codford in Wiltshire, archdeacon of that county, prebendary in the church of St. Salisbury, and rector of Stockton, Wilts. He adhered to the king's cause, was a defender of the Church of England in the worst of times, a good scholastic disputant, and an eminent divine. He died in 1663, and was buried with great solemnity in the north aisle of the cathedral of Christ Church.

JAMES MERRICK,

born in 1719, was educated at Reading school, and when senior scholar, and celebrated for his abilities, was elected by the majority of aldermen to a scholarship at St. John's; but his election being unjustifiably and violently opposed by the burgesses, he entered at Trinity College, took high honours,

* Aix La Chapelle.

and became tutor to Lord North and Lord Dartmouth. He was ordained, but never actively engaged, in parochial duties, being subject to acute pains in his head, frequent lassitude, and feverish complaints. Mr. Coates gives a long list of works composed by him, generally on sacred subjects, and many of them written at a very early age. He possessed a mature and distinguished knowledge of the most elegant branches of literature, was blest with an extraordinary memory, and was celebrated for his good nature and wit. His charity was extensive and his piety exemplary. He died, after a short illness, in January, 1769, and was buried in Caversham Church, near the remains of his family.

SIR JOHN BARNARD, KNT.

was born in Minster-street; he was educated in the religious persuasion of his parents, who were quakers, till the age of 19, when he was baptized by Bishop Compton at Fulham. He represented the city of London in parliament during many years. His character as a merchant was unblemished, and he was at the head of the body of merchants who came forward in the year 1745, for the support of public credit. His statue was placed in the Royal Exchange during his life time, and his modesty was so truly great, that it is said he never entered that building afterwards. He died in 1664, and was buried in the chancel of Mortlake Church.*

WILLIAM BAKER,

an eminent and learned printer, was born in Reading in the year 1742. The zealous, and as far as his health was concerned, injudicious industry with which he applied to study, introduced him to the notice of a dignitary of the church, who approved of his inclination for entering holy orders. In this however he was by some means disappointed; but he indulged his passion for literature by learning the business of a printer, which he exercised in London till he died. While engaged in this occupation, he enjoyed the friendship of many of the celebrated men of his age, with some of whom he carried on an elegant correspondence in Latin. He possessed a complete and critical knowledge of the Greek, Latin, French, and Italian languages, was partially acquainted with the Hebrew, and a perfect master of his own. His prose compositions were written with much taste, and his talent for poetry was of a high order. He died in 1785, aged 43 years, and was buried in St. Dioni's Backchurch, London. A Latin epitaph to his memory is placed on the tomb of his family, in the churchyard of St. Mary, Reading.

* In a note to the correspondence of Horace Walpole, edited by the late lamented Lord Dover (the last literary work of that amiable nobleman), Sir I. Barnard is noticed as "a great London Merchant, and one of the members for the city. His reputation for integrity and ability gave him much weight with the House of Commons."

SIR CONSTANTINE PHIPPS

was of an Irish family, but it is said was born in Reading. He was made Lord Chancellor of Ireland in 1710, from which office the Commons of Ireland petitioned the queen in 1713 that he might be removed; while the House of Lords and the Convocation addressed her majesty in his behalf. He however resigned the seals in the following year, on the change of ministry attending the accession of George I., and retired into private life. He died at London in 1723, aged 68, and was buried at White Waltham in the county of Berks.

PETER ZINRAN, M.D.

was the descendant of a family originally from Italy. He was born at Reading in 1705, and educated at Magdalene College in Oxford, where, in 1742, he took the degree of bachelor and doctor in physic. He followed the latter profession for some time in this town, but retired from it upon his first marriage. He died in 1781, aged 76, and was buried in St. Mary's church yard. "He was a man of fine parts," says Mr. Coates, "but of little application. Though naturally reserved, his conversation when among congenial friends was fluent, nervous, lively, and rich in metaphor."

PHANUEL BACON, D.D.

was the son of Phanuel Bacon, vicar of St. Lawrence's, and was a fellow collegian of Dr. Zinran's. He published five dramatic performances and various poems. He was also the author of "the Snipe," and "a Song of Similies," preserved in "the Oxford Sausage." The former is said to be one of the best ballads in the English language, and founded on facts, "the Frier" denoting the author, and "Peter" his fellow collegian above mentioned. Dr. Bacon was vicar of Bramber in Sussex, and rector of Balden in Oxfordshire, where he died June 10, 1783, in the 83rd year of his age.

MARY LATTER

was a resident in, but not a native of Reading, having been born at Henley upon Thames in 1725. She indulged her talent for satirical poetry by writing some verses descriptive of the persons and characters of several ladies who were inhabitants of the town; and which she afterwards disowned in a ludicrous rhyming advertisement inserted in the *Mercury*. In 1759 she published a small volume of miscellaneous works, wherein she describes herself as living "not very far from the market place, immersed in business and in debt, sometimes madly hoping to gain a competency, sometimes justly fearing dungeons and distress." She was treated with uncommon esteem by Rich, the patentee of Covent Garden Theatre; but that gentleman's death put an end to the hopes and expectations she had formed of having her tragedy, *The Siege of Jerusalem*, represented on the stage, and of the probable benefits that might arise from its success. She continued to write for support until her death, which took place at her house in Reading, March 29, 1777.

She was buried in the church yard of St. Lawrence, near the chancel, and close to the remains of her mother.

JOHN ROWELL

was an artist of celebrity who resided many years in this town, but is supposed to have been a native of High Wycombe in Buckinghamshire. He was a professor of the ancient art of painting on glass, and many of his works yet remain in the windows of various churches and chapels. He preserved the above noble art by the discovery of the composition of the beautiful red which is so conspicuous in our old windows. He offered to explain and teach the same to any proper person for a reasonable consideration, but his secret died with him in 1756.

RICHARD COLE,

otherwise known as poet Cole, was born in this town about the year 1715. It is uncertain whether he was brought up to any business, as in the latter part of his life he lived retired on a small patrimony in St. Mary's Butts. Though fond of company, he was reserved, except among his intimate friends; and though reserved, attached to the young, with whom he loved to converse and associate. His poetry was principally of a serious and religious nature, suitable to the disposition of his mind; though some of his pieces were of a satirical cast, and written in the style of Butler's *Hudibras*. Mr. Cole died in 1777 and was buried in St. Mary's church-yard.

ENVIRONS OF READING.

There are numerous walks in the neighbourhood of Reading, which will be found to offer many delightful objects to the pencil, in scenery combining two things than which nothing can be more at variance—beauty in nature and picturesque beauty; and from which the artist may select pictures of very distinct characters, worthy of being dwelt on with admiration. The two best situations for viewing the town itself to great advantage are from the Caversham Hills, and from a broad green terrace in one part of the grounds at White-Knights. The latter is about two miles south-east from Reading, and is one of the earliest specimens of the *ferme ornée* in England. The prospect from this spot is bounded on front by Caversham House and woods, and the Shiplake groves, forming the centre and one side of a picture, the east side of which comprises the summit of Sunning Hill, and an occasional glance of the river Thames. White-Knights was formerly the property of the Duke of Marlborough, but has recently, after a long course of legal

adjudication, fallen into the possession of a private individual, a native of Yorkshire. The house is a plain white edifice, placed nearly in the centre of the grounds, which chiefly consist of pasture and arable lands, intersected by an irregular sheet of water, bordered by gradually sloping lawns, on which the oak and poplar, and nearer to the edge of the lake, the graceful pendent willow are agreeably, and with regard to effect, picturesquely disposed. The artist again will meet with many points worth transferring to his portfolio in the walk between Reading and the village of Sonning, by the river side. There is one particularly agreeable view may be taken from the lock; the effect of the distance in the view we allude to is much increased by the residence of R. Palmer, esq.* (situated on an elevated spot above the Thames, near Sonning bridge), the trees among which the mansion is apparently shrouded conferring additional value on the bright spot of light which the house itself receives from its position. The village of Sunning was once the see of a bishop, whose diocese included the counties of Berks. and Wilts. It was successively filled by nine bishops who had a palace and park here; but in the time of Harrison, the last occupant, the bishopric was translated to Sherburne in Dorsetshire, and finally to Salisbury, to whose bishops this village still belongs. The parish contains about 7000 acres, exclusive of a part which is within an insulated district of Wiltshire. The parsonage house attached to the church is a very pleasing structure.

Twyford is a small village about two miles from Sonning, on the road from Reading to Maidenhead. It is situated near the confluence of the Loddont† with the Thames, and receives its appellation from two fords over the former river, which are now replaced by as many wooden bridges. This village and its vicinity may be considered classic ground, for Pope (according to Roscoe) went to school here, though no tradition of the sort is known among the

* Holme Park—Mr. Palmer is one of the county members.

† "The Loddon slow with verdant elders crowned."—Pope.

inhabitants—Day, the author of *Sundford and Merton*, died at Bear Hill, in the neighbourhood, and his remains lie interred in the church at Wargrave, a pleasant village two miles north-east of Twyford, and once celebrated for the princely mansion and the splendid entertainments of the amiable but dissolute Earl of Barrymore. About the same distance on the opposite side of Twyford is Ruscombe, hallowed as the residence and the grave of William Penn; it is a retired village, but worthy of a visit from those who love to contemplate the resting places of departed worth. Before proceeding finally to Maidenhead, we would recommend all travellers whose time is at their own disposal, and all artists in particular, to ascend Bowsey Hill, an eminence east of Twyford, the extended and magnificent view from the summit of which will amply repay the moderate fatigue incurred in the ascent.

MAIDENHEAD.

The ancient name of this place was South Arlington or Sudlington, and in some ancient records relating to it, it is also called Maiden-hithe. Its present appellation is supposed to be derived from the great veneration paid here formerly to the head of a British virgin, who was said to have suffered martyrdom with St. Ursula, at the electoral city of Cologne in Germany. It is situated 13 miles east of Reading, and 25 miles west of London, on the borders of the Thames, and consists principally of one long paved street, the north side of which is in the parish of Cookham, and the south in the parish of Bray. Before the building of the first bridge here about 1297, the great western road passed through Burnham and crossed the Thames at Babham Ferry, near Cookham. This bridge which was of wood was maintained by the corporation, who for that end were allowed the tolls both over and under, and three trees yearly out of Windsor forest, towards keeping it in repair. The present bridge is of stone, and is a work of considerable merit. It was commenced in 1772 from the designs of Sir Robert Taylor, and consists of thirteen semi-circular arches, seven of them in the centre of stone, and the three

extreme ones at each end of brick. The expence of building amounted to £19,000, exclusive of the purchase of some contiguous land, to render the work complete. The barge pier divides the counties of Berks. and Buckingham. The principal trade is in malt, meal, corn, and timber, which are conveyed to London in barges. By the charter of James II. the government of the town is vested in a mayor and aldermen, who choose from their own body a high steward, bridge master, and other officers. The market, granted by the charter of Henry VI., is held on Wednesdays, and there are three fairs during the year. There are eight almshouses in the town, erected in 1659, for eight men and their wives; and there is also a gaol for debtors and felons. The population amounts to nearly 13,000. The village of Bray is a little to the south-east of Maidenhead, and is supposed by Camden to have been the ancient Bibracte, and the habitation of the Bibruci, who submitted to Cæsar when he crossed the Thames. Its chief celebrity now is derived from the incumbent of the living in the sixteenth century, who from his determination to live and die vicar of Bray, shaped his conscience to the times, and in the reigns of Henry VIII. Edward VI. Mary, and Elizabeth, was twice a furious papist, and twice a zealous protestant.

WOKINGHAM,

or Oakingham is a large market town, 7 miles E.S.E. of Reading, and 32 miles W.S.W. of London. It is situated in the hundred of Sonning, on the edge of Windsor Forest, partly in Berkshire, and partly in an insulated part of Wiltshire. It consists of three streets, which meeting in the centre form a spacious area on which the market house is situated. The latter is an ancient building, framed with timber and open at the bottom, with a town hall above, wherein the public business is transacted. The church is a spacious structure, situated in that part of the parish which is in Wiltshire. The outside is composed of flints and rough grout work, the inside of the walls is principally of chalk. The interior has three aisles, supported by handsome pillars, and contains several monuments,

one of which, in the chancel, is to the memory of Thomas Goodwin, Bishop of Bath and Wells, who was born in this town in the year 1517. The town contains a free-grammar school and several charity schools. Archbishop Laud bequeathed to Wokingham an estate, the rent of which, amounting to about £40 per annum, is paid every third year to three servant girls aged 18, natives of the town, who shall have faithfully served one master or mistress for three successive years; and in the other years it is to be applied to the apprenticing of five boys. All the courts for Windsor Forest are held in this town, which was incorporated by James I., under an alderman, high steward, recorder, burgesses, and town clerk. It was formerly celebrated for the silk stockings manufactured in it, but the inhabitants are now more generally employed in agriculture, throwing silk, sorting wool, and making shoes, gauze, &c. and they amount in number to very nearly 3000. There has been for many years a singular custom of baiting two bulls in the market place on St. Thomas's day, for which purpose a small estate was foolishly bequeathed by Mr. Staverton for the purchase of a bull, to be given to the poor after being baited. About one mile from the town on Lockerley Green there is a hospital founded in 1663, for a chaplain or master, and as many poor men as the funds will support, under the direction of the Drapers' Company of London; and about three miles and a half S.E. of Wokingham, near Easthamstead Park, there is an extensive fortification, situated on the summit of a hill, and surrounded by a double ditch called Cæsar's camp. There is also near the camp a raised road nearly ninety feet wide, with a trench on each side, running east and west, which is known by the anti-euphonic appellation of the Devil's Highway. We have been unable to trace the origin of this name, which was probably conferred on it without any other reason than from the strange nature of its appearance, *utque mos vulgo*.

CAVERSHAM.

is a neat village in Oxfordshire, situated upon the

Thames, over which there is a bridge, and is about two miles N. of Reading, on the road to Henley. The two counties of Berks and Oxford meet nearly in the centre of the bridge. The south division, under which barges pass, and the five brick arches north of it are in Berkshire, and are kept in repair by the corporation of Reading, who formerly levied a toll on all strangers crossing any of the bridges leading into the town, and also upon all barges making the passage under Caversham bridge. It is not known when the former exaction ceased, but the latter was continued down to the reign of James II., when it was resisted by the barge masters of Oxford, who claimed exemption from the tolls upon a particular plea on behalf of themselves, and upon a general one for the benefit of all proprietors of barges at large. Under the former they claimed their privilege, as citizens of Oxford to be exempt from the payment of pontage throughout all England, by a charter granted to the citizens by Richard II.; and they also alleged "that since the alteration of the bridge, by removing several old decayed stone and brick arches, which formerly obstructed the passage by penning up the water above the bridge, boats could now pass without the use of the winch, which alone they had been accustomed to pay for, and not as a toll for passing under the bridge.." The barge-masters obtained a favourable verdict in the Court of Exchequer, where this cause was tried, and no toll has since that time been required for barges belonging to any place on the river, on passing this bridge.

The extensive mansion at Caversham, which forms so conspicuous an object from the Bath road, was erected by the first Earl of Cadogan, who purchased the property from Lord Craven's family. The ancient house formerly occupied by Lord Craven stood nearer to the Thames than the present edifice does. It had three avenues of trees in front, the centre one of which was called the queen's walk, in honour of Anne of Denmark, consort of James I., who was entertained here when on her journey to Bath. And a second avenue was called the king's walk in memory

of Charles I., who was permitted to come here from his prison at Windsor, to visit his children who resided at Caversham House, in the custody of the Earl of Northumberland. The mansion erected by Lord Cadogan was a most magnificent building, but was reduced by his successor, and again altered by Colonel Marsac who became the proprietor of it, and it is now unoccupied. It is an elegant structure with two handsome wings, situated on an eminence which commands a view almost unequalled in this county for extent and diversity. The grounds which include about five hundred acres, divided into lawn, park, and garden, were laid out under the superintendence of the eminent landscape gardener, Capability Brown.

There was formerly a priory of black canons at Caversham, cell to Nutley Abbey in Buckinghamshire, famous for the story of the angel with one wing, who brought hither the spear that pierced our Saviour's side on the cross.

HENLEY

stands upon the Thames in the extremity of the county of Oxford, and is connected with Berkshire by a handsome stone bridge erected over the river. It is supposed to be the most ancient town in the county, and is also thought to be the *Gallewa Atrebatum* of Antoninus, an opinion chiefly founded upon the number of Roman coins discovered here, and from the military way that runs between it and Speen. It possesses a very ancient and spacious church, the lofty tower of which was built by Cardinal Wolsey, and several schools and almshouses. Its market is one of the greatest in England for corn, and it has also a considerable trade to London in malt, meal, flour, and wood, which are sent down the river in barges. It is altogether a well-built town, and has been much improved of late years, the streets having been widened, paved, and lightened, and the houses in general modernized. It is a corporate town, governed by a warden, burgesses, and other officers, and formerly sent two members to parliament. The population is about 3,300.

WALLINGFORD

Is 15 miles N.W. of Reading, on the road to Oxford, through Pangbourne and Streatly. The former village is situated at a short distance from the Thames, about six miles from Reading, and has an easy communication with Oxfordshire, by means of a very commodious bridge. The parish of Pangbourne extends two miles and a quarter in length, and two miles in breadth; it is ten miles in circumference, and contains 1,663 acres. The church is dedicated to St. James, and is compass roofed, tiled, and built of stone and flint, the outside of which is now almost covered with plaister. The present steeple was erected at the west end of the old south aisle in 1718; it is of brick, and contains a ring of six bells, with a clock of good workmanship, the gift of Antrum Woolford by will, 1789. The pulpit is of curiously carved oak, of the age of Queen Elizabeth. The great and small tithes of Bere Court in this parish, a seat of the abbot and monks of Reading, was granted to them by charter at an early period by Robert, Bishop of Salisbury; and they also received 32s. and 8d. yearly from the rector of Pangbourne, who was instituted by the bishop on the presentation of the abbot and convent. One mile south of Pangbourn is the small parish of Tidmarsh. The church is dedicated to St. Lawrence, and consists of a body and chancel divided from each other by a Gothic arch. The chancel is of singular construction, forming a pentagon with a lancet window in each of the sides, separated by clustered Gothic pillars with fancy capitals, surmounted by niches for images. The doorway of the church is a Saxon arch richly ornamented, over which is a representation of a human head. The door itself which is of oak has been removed, and was lately serving for the door of a hen house in an adjoining farm yard. Between Pangbourn and Streatly is Basildon Park, the seat of Sir Francis Sykes, bart. The mansion is a very elegant structure, situated in a park well stocked with deer, and commanding some beautiful prospects with glimpses of the Thames between. The various lofty hills in the neighbourhood

afford some of the most pleasant rides and walks in the county.

Wallingford is a very ancient town situated on the Thames, the certain origin of which is obscured by doubt and contradiction. Camden supposes it to be the Gallena of Ptolemy and Antoninus and the capital of the Atrebatii; and derives its present name from *Gallena*, a little altered, and *Ford*. It was formerly surrounded by walls and possessed a castle of great size and magnificence, which at one time was considered impregnable. It was surrounded by a double wall and double ditch, and the citadel or keep stood on a high artificial hill, and had within a well of immense depth. Camden, who has a hypothesis for every thing, and in whose days the castle was entire, ascribes it to the Romans. It was several times the place of meeting between King John and his discontented barons; and it was repaired and garrisoned by the Royalists at the commencement of the civil war between Charles I. and his parliament. It surrendered towards the close of that contest, and was entirely dismantled four years afterwards, in 1653. The materials were all carried away, and there is now not a vestige of it remaining except part of a wall towards the river side. The town had formerly no less than fourteen churches, besides a collegiate chapel in its castle, but it now contains only three, St. Mary's, St. Leonard's, and St. Peter's. The latter two were reduced to ruins during the siege of the town in 1646. St. Leonard's was re-opened for divine service in the year 1704; but St. Peter's was not re-built till about the middle of the eighteenth century, and then chiefly through the exertions of Sir William Blackstone, who erected the spire, which is of a very singular form, at his own expence. Besides the three churches, the town contains meeting houses for Quakers, Methodists, and Baptists; a free school, a handsome market house and town hall, and six almshouses for as many poor women, who are allowed three shillings and two pence per week. It suffered severely by a plague in the reign of Edward III., which swept away many of the inhabitants; and its

decay was still more accelerated afterwards by the road to Gloucester being turned away from the town, and by the subsequent erection of the bridges at Abingdon and Dorchester, by which a great portion of its trade was removed to those places and their vicinity. Wallingford was a borough in the reign of Edward the Confessor, and sent two members to parliament from the twenty-third year of Edward I. till the second of William IV., when it was deprived of the power of electing more than one member by a clause in schedule B. of the memorable Reform Bill. To the zealous exertion of one of its former representatives already mentioned, Sir W. Blackstone, it owes much of its returning prosperity; particularly in the formation of two turnpike roads, one opening a communication between Reading and Oxford; and the other leading to Wantage, through the vale of White Horse, which have contributed greatly towards the restoration of the business of the town, and its consequent improvement. The inhabitants, exceeding in number two thousand, are principally employed in agriculture and malt making. This trade is in a very flourishing state from the convenience possessed by those concerned in it of sending their commodities to London by water. The demand is said to amount to upwards of 150,000 bushels annually. The town was incorporated by James I., and is governed by a mayor, and five aldermen (who are justices of the peace within the borough), a town clerk, and other inferior officers, chosen out of the burgesses, who are eighteen in number. The old bridge over the Thames was of very great antiquity. It was a substantial stone structure above three hundred yards long, with nineteen arches and four drawbridges. The time of its erection is not known, but it was evidently one of the oldest structures of the kind on the river. The pointed sterlings on the upper side were so well constructed that they were able to resist during many centuries the violence of the most impetuous floods; but the bridge generally was found to be so much injured from the great flood of the year 1809 that it was taken down, and the present handsome modern ridge erected in its place.

About two miles south from Wallingford is Cholsey Farm, which was formerly reputed to be the largest and most compact in England, the rent amounting to £1000. annually. The Great Barn or Manor Barn in which the Abbot of Reading, to whom the manor belonged, deposited his tithes, is yet standing, though erected prior to the dissolution. Mr. Man very reasonably rejects Coates's idea of carrying the date of its erection so far back as the year 1101, or that it ever belonged to the ancient abbey of Cholsey. This barn corresponding to the farm is the largest in England; it measures 303 feet in length and 54 in breadth. The roof is supported on each side by seventeen pillars, each of which is four yards in circumference; they rise in the centre of the barn to the height of fifty-one feet, but near the walls their greatest altitude does not exceed eight.

NEWBURY

Is 17 miles W. of Reading, the road to it passing the manor of Southcote in the parish of St. Mary's on the left, and continuing through the villages of Theele, Woolhampton, and Thatcham. The manor of Southcote was possessed at a very remote period by the family of Belet, from whom it passed to the Windsors, and ultimately became the property of the Blagraves, who have held it during nearly two centuries and a half. The manor house is a large brick edifice of an antique form, placed on an elevated situation and moated round. It is supposed to have been built when it came into the possession of the Blgrave family with part of the materials from the dissolved abbey. The hall was formerly lighted by a lantern top, which was removed many years ago, owing to its dilapidated state. There is only one tower remaining out of the four which originally added to the ornament and strength of the building, the lower part of which is converted into a dairy; the room over which appears to have been used for defence, as there are loop-holes in it for musquetry, and from its proximity to the drawbridge it is supposed to have been a watch station. There is a tradition that the house was once occupied by the children of Charles I.

who are said to have had the small pox while residing in it; but there is no proof of such having been the case.

The village of Theele is a tithing within the parish of Englefield, and is about four miles from Reading. The approach to it is through a beautiful woodland country highly cultivated, and enlivened by occasional views of the Kennet, which glides through some beautiful meadows on the south. Englefield is the site of a battle fought between the Danes and Saxons in 811. The parish church has nothing remarkable in its style, but it contains some ancient and curious monuments; among which are two in low pointed arches, within the thickness of the wall, of a knight and a lady: the former bears all the insignia of a Templar, and the figure of the latter is carved out of a piece of solid oak. There is also one to the memory of the Marquis of Winchester, who so nobly defended Basing House for Charles I., with an inscription by Dryden. Englefield House is situated on the declivity of a verdant hill, at the foot of which is a beautiful serpentine sheet of water, on which are several woody islands, stocked with abundance of wild fowl. The rectory of Tilehurst, a parish adjoining Englefield, and including within its circuit the village of Theale, is said to be the largest in Berkshire. A new church has been lately built in this parish by the widow of the Rev. Dr. Shepherd, who also very munificently endowed it. It is on the florid Gothic style, of exquisite proportion, and forms altogether a very pleasing object.

The road on to Woolhampton lies through a superb country, bounded on one side by a chain of hills, and generally ornamented by every variety of wood, and interspersed with elegant seats, villages, and cultivated grounds. Woolhampton is a small village, celebrated for its peat pits. Thatcham was formerly a market town, but is now nothing more than a respectable village. The parish is still more extensive than the rectory of Tilehurst. It includes some part of the suburbs of Newbury, and contains, according to Rocque's survey, 11,491 acres. In the days of its

prosperity the market was held every Sunday, on the spot where the remains of the cross now stand, and with Thatcham itself was the property of the abbot and monks of Reading. On the dissolution of the abbey the market either ceased altogether, or was transferred to Newbury. The church is a large and ancient structure of unwrought stone, and contains several monuments of a very remote period.

Newbury is a spacious market and borough town, situated on the Kennet, which runs through the centre of it. It was formerly celebrated for its woollen manufactures, but these having almost entirely disappeared, it is more noted now for its excellent corn market, and is besides a place of extensive general trade, owing to the facility of communication it possesses with London and Bristol, by means of the different navigable canals, which have been completed within the last thirty years. The streets are arranged nearly in the shape of the letter Y, the angles branching off from the market place, and the foot of the letter being formed by the village of Speenhamland, which may be considered part of its suburbs. The church is a plain stone building, and contains among other monuments that of John Winchcomb, alias Swalewood (better known as Jack of Newbury) and his wife. "He kept," says Fuller, "100 looms in his house, each of them managed by a man and a boy. In the expedition to Flodden Field against James, king of Scotland, he marched with one hundred of his own men well mounted, to show that the *painful in peace* could be *valiant in war*. He feasted King Henry VIII. and his first queen, Catharine, at his own house, yet extant at Newbury, the church of which he built from the pulpit to the tower inclusively. He died about 1520." The town possesses a large number of alms-houses, and several charity schools, a commodious town hall, and various meeting houses. It is not known by whom it was first incorporated, but Queen Elizabeth granted it a charter in 1596, and it is governed by a mayor, high steward, recorder, six aldermen, and twenty-four capital burgesses. The borough is very ancient, and was a place of great

consequence at the period when the Norman survey was taken. The town is thought to have taken its name from its supposed origin out of the ruins of Speen, the Roman *Spinæ*. It became remarkable during the civil wars for two battles fought here between the parliamentary army and that of the royalists, commanded by Charles I. in person. The market day is on Thursday, and it has also five annual fairs. The population amounts to about 5000. In the vicinity of Newbury are Donnington House (once the residence of a son of Geoffrey Chancer, and at a later period a garrison for Charles I.), and Straw House, which formed the head-quarters of that unhappy king at the time of the last battle of Newbury, and where a hole in the wainscot of one of the rooms is shown as having been made by a bullet fired at the monarch, and which very narrowly missed its object. These places however are situated at too great a distance from Reading to be included under the head of *Environs*, and consequently prevent us from going into a more detailed account of them.

CHARITABLE DONATIONS.

1445.

The first charitable institution on record in Reading was the foundation of the free school in the above year by John Thorne, the twenty-eighth abbot. A detailed account of this charitable institution will be found under the head "Free School."

1477.

John a Leche, otherwise called, from the post he held in the abbey, John of the Larder, left by will tenements, lands, and all debts owing to him, for the purpose of building eight alms-houses, vested in the corporation.

1554.

Sir Thomas White endowed the free school with two exhibitions to the college of St. John's in Oxford, and bequeathed the annual sum of £104. to be given in rotation to one of twenty-four cities or towns named in his will, for the purpose of being lent to four poor young men of such cities (for the space of ten years)

who are freemen of the same, and carrying on the trade of clothiers. Reading being one of the twenty-four to whom the advantages of the above bequest are extended, received the first payment in 1759, and continued to receive in its turn the like sum of £104. every twenty-four years, till the fourth payment became due in 1651, and which was not discharged till three years after, owing to the civil war of that century, and only then obtained in consequence of the frequent applications made to the trustees by the corporation. The ninth payment should have been in 1795, it did not however take place till 1798, but the tenth was regularly furnished in 1822, and the next payment will become due in 1846.

1576.

Mr. Robert Boyer, tanner, of Reading gave all his lands, tenements, and hereditaments, in the parish of Burghfield in trust for the use of the poor. Vested in the corporation.

1602.

Mr. Augustine Knapp, of Rotherfield Peppard, Oxon bequeathed the sum of twenty pounds to buy a stock for the employment of the poor for ever in work. He also gave twenty shillings yearly to be bestowed on the clothing of poor, lame, blind, or infirm parishioners of St. Giles's. Trustees: the corporation, and the churchwardens of St. Giles's.

1605.

William Palmer, of Southstoke, Oxon, gave an annual rent of forty shillings to the use of the poor. Vested in the corporation.

Mr. John Noyse of Shinfield in this county bequeathed in the same year a rent charge of twenty shillings a year, but it is not known for what purpose. Vested in the corporation.

1606.

Mr. Thomas Lydall gave by will to the church wardens of St. Lawrence's parish ten shillings annually towards repairing the church seats and bells; and the further annual sum of ten shillings to the preacher at the above church. For the payment of these legacies the testator vested in the corporation

some tenements held by him in Friar-street, and directed the surplus of the profits to be bestowed upon the relief of such poor people and fatherless children as from time to time shall be relieved and kept in the hospital, afterwards converted into the Town Bridewell.

Mr. Thomas Deane, clothier, of Reading, gave a rent charge of three pounds on an estate, now the property of Lord Braybrooke, at Ruscombe, Berks, to be bestowed on the poor of Reading, in bread, for ever. That is to say, upon St. Thomas's day, twenty dozen; on Good Friday, twenty dozen; and upon Ascension eve, twenty dozen. Vested in the churchwardens of St. Giles.

1608.

Mr. John Ball, of Shinfield, Berks, left in trust to the corporation, the sum of twenty pounds, to purchase stock for the employment of the poor.

1609.

Mr. Joseph Carter, of Reading, gave twenty shillings a year, for the use of the poor and orphans in the hospital; payable out of two tenements over against St. Edmund Chapel in Reading. Vested in the corporation.

Mr. Edward Kemys, of London, left fifty pounds for the purpose of purchasing an annuity, to be distributed among twenty-four poor people, at three shillings and fourpence each, per annum. The above sum was laid out in the purchase of land, which produces four pounds per annum. Vested in the corporation.

1610

Mr. Thomas Deane by indenture gave £160. to be laid out in the purchase of land, for the support of two poor men not less than 55 years of age; and of three fatherless children, under the age of ten, who were to remain in the hospital (now the town Bridewell) till they were sixteen. The men to have 52s. each annually, and the rest to be applied to the maintenance of the children. Vested in the corporation, who were authorized to fill up the vacancies within the space of ten days. The lands purchased produce the annual sum of ten pounds, eight shillings.

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Mr. James Pocock gave £25. for the purchase of land, the profits arising from which he directed should be spent in buying eight shirts and eight shifts, of two shillings value each; of which five shirts and as many shifts were to be distributed yearly to ten poor people of Reading, and the remainder to be given to the poor of Frilsham and those of Yattendon every alternate year. The mayor or his assignees to have sixpence, and the churchwardens of the latter two places fourpence each to see the same properly executed. With this sum of £25. and a part of Mr. Deane's money, some houses were purchased in Sievier's-street; but these being soon after burnt at the siege of Reading the number of shirts and shifts was reduced to six.* Vested in the corporation.

Mr. Richard Turner of Reading gave £15. and a tenement in the Old-ward, to furnish the hospital for the benefit of the poor.

1611.

Mr. Nicholas Russell of Shinfield bequeathed an annuity of 13s. 4d. to be bestowed every St. Thomas's day on the poor of the parish of St. Mary. Vested in the churchwardens of that parish.

John Blagrave gave annually 1s. each to twenty poor people of St. Mary's parish, twenty of St. Lawrence's, and six of St. Giles'. Vested in the corporation. He also gave fifty shillings yearly, to be divided among twenty poor housekeepers; and forty shillings yearly among twenty poor widows of the parish of St. Mary.

* That the siege of Reading should have caused a reduction in the number of shifts and shirts belonging to this charity was contrary to the truth of the usually received apophthegm, a small effect produced by a great cause. It may perhaps recall to the memories of some of our readers another close connection between the sublime and ridiculous, to be found in Gibbon, who notices the extreme cheapness of herrings in England, A.D. 1238, owing to the market being glutted, from the northern nations not sending over their ships to purchase that article, as they had been accustomed to do, through their fear of the Tartars, who were about invading Europe. "It is whimsical enough," says the historian of the Decline and Fall, "that the orders of a Mogul Khan who reigned on the borders of China, should have lowered the price of herrings in the English market."

Vested in the churchwardens. He bequeathed also in trust to the corporation ten pounds to be distributed on Good Friday: viz. ten shillings to the vicar of St. Lawrence's for a sermon on that day; six pounds, thirteen shillings, and fourpence, to one maid servant who has lived five years in the same place; twenty shillings to be distributed after the sermon among sixty poor householders of St Mary's, who are to accompany the maid home; three shillings and four pence to the ringers; and the same sum each to the youngest churchwarden and the clerk of the parish.

1613.

Mr. Edward Hamblin of Tilehurst gave a rent charge of four pounds per annum for the relief of poor men, two or three of whom at least to be butchers. Vested in the corporation.

1614.

Mr. John Johnson of Reading bequeathed the following sums: for the repair of the church and bells of St. Lawrence, annually, ten shillings; to the vicar for a sermon on St. John's day, annually, ten shillings; for bread to be distributed among the poor on the same day, annually, twenty-two shillings; to the clerk and sexton for distributing the same, two shillings.

The above sums were to be paid out of a legacy of thirty-five pounds, left in trust to the corporation, who invested it in property which produces three pounds, eleven shillings, and fourpence, per annum. Another legacy which this testator left to the poor of St. Lawrence was lost in 1657, through the insolvency of the senior churchwarden, to whose management it had been intrusted. He also left twenty pounds, to be lent for the apprenticing poor children, natives of the town.

1617.

Mr. Bernard Harrison left funds for the almshouses now situated in Southampton-street; to which charity Mrs. Wimbledon left three pounds per annum, and Mr Shirley two pounds per annum.

1619.

Mr. Anthony Thorne (alias Legg) left £50 for the relief of eight poor people; and Mrs. Mary Worsely

£40 for the benefit of sixty poor widows of this town. These sums, vested in the corporation, produce £10 per annum.

1620.

Mr. Robert Reeves, twelve penny loaves, to be distributed weekly; Mr. John Mills, £6 per annum to six householders of St. Mary's who do not receive parish relief.

1621.

Mrs. Elizabeth Elwes, the produce of £100 for the annual relief of the poor of St. Lawrence. Vested in the churchwardens.

1624.

Mr John Kendrick gave by will £7,500 for the benefit of the clothing manufactories of the town. £100 to be bestowed on poor maids on the day of their marriage, at the rate of 40s. each; but none were eligible who had not served at least seven years in the same situation. £50 to the churchwardens of St. Mary's towards finishing the pinnacles on the tower of the church. £500 to be lent from three years to three years for ever to ten poor clothiers of the town, at the rate of £50 each. £250 to purchase lands and hereditaments to the annual value of £10 to maintain daily divine service in St. Mary's church at six in the morning. Vested chiefly in the corporation.

Mr. Griffin Jenkins left funds for the alms-houses already mentioned in our general view of the town.

1630.

Mr. Richard Johnson left £100 and several freehold tenements, in trust to the corporation, for the purpose of paying to the vicar of St. Lawrence's ten shillings annually for a sermon; to give to the poor twenty dozen of bread and twenty shillings in money; one shilling each to the clerk and sexton; and the residue to go to the repairs of the church. He also left £100 to be lent to four tradesmen for ten years; £20 to apprentice four orphans; a rent charge of £4 to the parish of St. Lawrence; 10% towards building a conduit in the market place; and 6% to buy a silver bowl, the property of the mayor for the time being. Vested in the corporation.

Mr. William Brackstone bequeathed a rent charge of £4. a year, to be distributed on Good Friday, annually, among 180 poor women and twenty poor men, under certain conditions.

1634.

Mr. William Kendrick gave funds for the support of the alms-houses already described.

1635.

Sir Thomas Vatchell knt. gave by indenture the almshouses in Castle-street for the reception of six men, as already stated.

Mr. Roger Knight bequeathed a rent charge of 3*l.* per annum to pay 2*s.* to forty-eight poor parishioners of St. Lawrence's; 2*s.* towards the repairs of the church and bells; 10*s.* to the preacher; and 2*s.* to the clerk and sexton.

1636.

Mr. John Ayre (or Ayres) bequeathed a rent charge of 5*l.* per annum, 4*l.* of which were to be lent to two young men of the parish of St. Lawrence, who had served their apprenticeships, and one shilling each to twenty poor men, to be chosen by the corporation.

1637.

Mr. William Ironmonger left 2*l.* per annum towards providing ten waistcoats, to be distributed annually among the poor.

1638.

Mr. William Elkins gave 1*l.* per annum, to be distributed among equal numbers of poor men and widows of the parish of St. Mary.

Mr. Reginald Butler bequeathed a rent charge of 1*l.* per annum, and Mr. John Bagley another of 10*s.* per annum, to be divided among the poor of the parishes of St. Mary and St. Lawrence.

1640.

Archbishop Laud left in trust to the corporation the following legacies, subject to certain restrictions:— For apprenticing ten poor boys of the town, &c. an annual rent charge of 200*l.* To be divided every third year among five servant maids who had served three years in one place, and one from Wokingham, 120*l.* For apprenticing boys, setting up young beginners, increasing the stipends of the vicar of St.

Lawrence and of the master of the free school, and for the entertainment of the visitors from St. John's College, &c. the annual sum of 200*l*. The latter sum was a rent charge on a farm which is now let for 600*l*. and the charities are increased in proportion.

1646.

Mr. Richard Aldworth gave 4000*l*. to purchase a convenient spot for a school in which twenty boys of the town were to be educated, and two apprenticed annually, with some small gifts to the poor.

1647.

Mr. Richard Jayes, alms-houses and funds for their support in Hosier's-lane.

1653.

Mr. John Webb, an annual rent charge of 4*l*. for the perpetual maintenance of a weekly lecture at St. Lawrence's, 10*l*. towards purchasing a dwelling house for the master of the free school, and 1*s*. per week to each of the four widows in the alms-houses near St. Mary's.

1661.

Mr. Thomas Ward bequeathed a rent charge of 10*s*. per annum, to be distributed among four persons of the parish of St. Giles.

1666.

Sir Thomas Rich bequeathed 54*l*. per annum for the maintenance of six boys of the town, and three of the village of Sonning, in the blue coat school founded by Mr. Aldworth.

Mr. I. Chamberlayne gave a rent charge of 1*l*. per annum, to be given to the poor of St. Mary's parish every Ash Wednesday.

1673.

Mr. Stephen Atwater left 1*l*. per annum, to be distributed every St. Stephen's day among four poor men of St. Giles's parish, employed in the clothing trade.

The same sum was bequeathed by Mr. Samuel Jemmett to be divided annually on the 1st of February among four poor housekeepers of the above parish.

1696.

Mr. John Hall, funds for a school and an alms-house, both already described.

Mr. Thomas Harrison, 1*l*. per annum, to be divided among eight poor women in Mr. Harrison's almshouses.

1700.

Mr. William Malthus, 91*l*. per annum for the purpose of maintaining eleven boys of this town in the blue coat school.

Mr. John Pottinger, a rent charge of 15*l*. per annum, for the maintenance of two boys in the same school.

1712.

Mrs. Mary Kenrick, 8*l*. per annum to the poor of the three parishes.

1717.

Mr. and Mrs. West, 5*l*. annually to each of three inhabitants of St. Mary's parish, who must be elected by the vestry.

1720.

The same parties gave houses and lands to the governors of Christ's Hospital which then let for 241*l*. 8*s*. for the educating and apprenticing as many poor boys and girls as the sum would admit of, two fifths of such children always to be elected and presented by the three parishes of Reading alternately. Mr. West also gave 1200*l*. in trust to the clothworkers' company, to purchase lands for the maintenance of six boys in the blue coat school at Reading, and a further donation for providing the same with apparel.

1723.

Mrs. Frances West conveyed by indenture to the president and fellows of Sion College houses and grounds which then let for 240*l*. per annum, in trust, to pay twenty persons therein mentioned 10*l*. per annum each for life; and 20*l*. annually for placing out two orphans, sons of clergymen; and 2*l*. 10*s*. per annum to the accountant; and afterwards to divide the rents and profits into three parts, and to pay one of the three parts to poor men and women, not less than 50 years of age, at the rate of 5*l*. per annum for life; three fourths of these poor people to be natives of Reading.

1726.

Mr. Edward Hungerford left the interest of 200*l.* to the vicar of St. Lawrence's parish, on condition that the Common Prayer be read in his church every afternoon.

1731.

Mr. John Allen, the rents of lands purchased at 1000*l.* for apprenticing poor boys.

1755.

The Rev. William Boudry and John Richards, esq. lands, &c. the produce of which is cast for by lot annually, by three poor maids who have lived five years in the same service. The successful candidate receives 28*l.* and the thrower of the next highest number receives 4*l.* and the other 3*l.* the gift of Mr. Annesley.

1765.

Mr. Joseph Neale left a sum of money with which was purchased 314*l.* 5*s.* 11*d.* South Sea Stock, for the support of a charity school. Vested in the three vicars.

1772.

Mrs. Mary Love, the interest of 300*l.* to be distributed annually in bread.

Mr. J. Richards, 500*l.* for the benefit of the girls' charity school, of which he was the principal promoter.

The Rev. I. Spicer gave to the same charity a leasehold estate amounting to 8*l.* 6*s.* per annum, and the reversion of 200*l.* after the death of his wife.

1786.

Mr. John Leggatt gave in trust to the corporation 210*l.* with the interest thereof, to apprentice one poor boy out of the three parishes alternately, and 50*l.* towards the support of the boys in the blue coat school.

Mrs. Clementine Fragnall gave by will 100*l.* stock, for the benefit of the girls' charity school.

1789.

Aubry Flory, esq. gave 300*l.* to the same charity.

1811.

Mr. Thomas Cooke bequeathed the following sums for the increase of the weekly pay of all the poor in the various alms-houses :

	£		
To John a Larder's	1400	3 per cent.	to 8 men and women.
To William Kendrick's	875	ditto	to 5 ditto.
To Sir T. Vatchell's	1050	ditto	to 6 men.
To John Hall's	875	ditto	to 5 men.
To Bernard Harrison's	1400	ditto	to 8 women.
To John Webb's	700	ditto	to 4 women.

£6300 ; interest, £189, or £5 5s. each, annually.

1813.

Edward Simeon, esq. bequeathed the following sums in trust to the mayor, aldermen, and burgesses, to be thus disposed of :

	£
For bread tickets annually to the poor, the interest of	1000
To the blue coat school	100
To clothing the sunday school children, every alternate year, the interest of	2500
To the girls' charity school	200
To the Infants' Friends' Society	105
*To the Reading Dispensary	210
To the Widows' Society	600

Martin Annesley, esq. placed 500*l.* in the hands of the corporation, that with the interest or produce thereof the unsuccessful maid servants in casting the dice may receive, the second highest thrower 4*l.* and the thrower of the lowest number 3*l.* each, on Good Friday, and the first Monday after Bartholomew's day, every year.

1826.

The Rev. T. H. Woodroffe bequeathed to the Reading Dispensary the sum of 1350*l.* in the 3 per cents. in aid of that institution ; the smaller donations will be found in our account of that establishment.

1833.

Mrs. Stephens presented to the committee of the Infants' School the sum of 100*l.* which has been appropriated to the purchase of a piece of ground for erecting on it a new school room.

In addition to the above charitable donations, from which the poor of the town derive much benefit, there is a fund for the purchase of coals, which are distrib-

* The Board at the Dispensary says £189, perhaps some legacy and other duties are deducted.

uted to the poor of the three parishes indiscriminately. Also Dorcas societies which supply the laboring poor with clothing and other necessities, and to the funds of which the objects of the charity of the societies themselves contribute small weekly payments, which are returned at the end of the year in various articles made up or furnished for their use, and according to the amount of their contributions. There are some other charitable donations noticed by Mr. Mann, but as they are not included in the return made to parliament, and have either expired or been applied to purposes we have elsewhere noticed, we have not inserted them in the above list.

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